UiB

A quest for success in urban China

A study of "Young Urban Professionals" in Beijing

DAG INGE BØE

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the M.A degree
Department of Social Anthropology
15.12.2013

一九四九年:　只有社会主义才能救中国

一九七九年:　只有资本主义才能救中国

一九八九年:　只有中国才能救社会主义

二零零九年:　只有中国才能救资本主义

1949: Only socialism can save China

1979: Only capitalism can save China

1989: Only China can save socialism

2009: Only China can save capitalism

From Li Xing: *The Rise of China and the Capitalist World Order* (2013, 2)

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I examine how young urban professionals in Beijing relate to their experience of participating in the modern Chinese capitalist economy. Their experiences are seen along economic and social lines: from considering economic and social historical context to discussing the on-going process of individualisation in China as presented by young urban professionals through how they talk about economic life and social life. Relating to economic life, the ideal workplace and the various factors that influence their choice of workplace, from corporate culture to corporate welfare provision is presented. Different spheres of corporate culture inform their choices when assessing companies, as they tend to reject a cultural Chinese business approach in favour of international companies due to their disregard of the importance of *guanxi,* social connections in a company with a culturally Chinese corporate culture. The ideal job provides security for the future through being financially high-yielding and stable. In a gendered version, women should have a stable job that is not too demanding, conveniently in harmony with an explicit ideal of the undisputed male breadwinner. This interplay between economic life and social life is recurring theme throughout the thesis, as social life and economic life are the two meta-levels that the underlying current of individualisation manifested itself the most clearly on when my informants articulated their view of the challenges they are facing and the options they have. The new, individualised social life in urban China is discussed through the strong emphasis on marriage and concern for the social self; a social pressure on men to carry the family name on and a social disregard for women who fail to marry. It is considered appropriate for men to marry down, again the ideal of the undisputed breadwinner, ensuring that women who succeed too well become unmarriageable, written off as "leftover-women". Different spheres of corporate culture again influences the strategies of young urban professionals, as State Owned Enterprises, the high seat of culturally Chinese corporate culture, provide an unprecedented stability, gives various welfare perks including potentially the immensely important Beijing *hukou* residency permit, and also are more likely to give *peiyang,* corporate training as young urban professionals emphasise the importance to continuously improve themselves. This drive to improve oneself is discussed in terms of *suzhi,* a Chinese concept of "human quality" that political rhetoric insists on increasing on a national level, as the insufficient *suzhi* is preventing China from modernising. The emphasis placed on *peiyang* might be seen as internalising the national concern for *suzhi.* This internalisation is symptomatic in the analytical approach towards for young urban professionals in terms of class, as it relates to individualisation.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

First and foremost I want to express my gratitude to the young urban professionals in Beijing whom I had the privilege of spending time with. It was a pleasure and I am thankful that you agreed to spend your free time discussing your personal hopes, dreams and concerns with me. I hope I have done justice to you what you told me when theorising and analysing our friendly chats.

I want to thank Professor Emeritus Gunnar Haaland for agreeing to supervise me and doing so with great enthusiasm until you involuntarily had to resign from health concerns. I will always be grateful for your efforts in arranging the Ethnic Relations course in Kunming in 2009 despite only one participating Norwegian student and I remember fondly your stimulating lectures and the two adventurous mini-fieldworks you planned. You were the midwife when my academic interest in China was born. I treasure our friendship and always look forward to our next encounter, which I hope will be very soon.

I want to thank Professor Leif Manger for agreeing to be my supervisor when I had to change due to Prof. Haaland's health condition. It has been a true privilege and your contribution has greatly enhanced this thesis. You have the rare gift of inspiration when radiating professional dedication in a way that can make master students truly believe they can walk on water. Your support through this process has been invaluable. The weaknesses that remain in this thesis are despite your dedicated effort and only the author himself is to be blamed.

I want to thank the Faculty of Social Sciences for the grant I was given for my field work. I also want to thank NIAS for granting me the SUPRA scholarship in Copenhagen for two weeks. I especially want to thank librarian Per Hansen for his enthusiastic and dedicated help that made our stay much more rewarding.

At last I want to thank my astonishing wife Camilla Aasen Bøe, who has stood shoulder to shoulder with me throughout this master's degree. Without your unfailing love and support this thesis would not have been possible and I stand forever grateful for you just being you.

Table of Contents

Introduction: Theoretical and methodological perspectives

The ethnographic study presented in this thesis aims to investigate the modern Chinese urban capitalist economy of Beijing through the lived lives of a segment of its participants; young urban professionals. These young urban professionals are integral in the economic machinery of China[1]. It is well covered in existing literature that China's economic development is firmly entrenched in a long-standing, state-led project of national revival; this I will return to below. The young, urban professionals play an ambiguous role here, being educated and resourceful young urbanites they are key to the economic miracle the national revival is built upon; being outside the economic and political elite, they represent a potential danger to the elite. I will show how young urban professionals experience a certain distance towards the political establishment and their handling of the national revival project. The young urban professionals, being specialists with university education, play a fundamental role as China seeks to move on from being "the factory of the world" and towards becoming a consumption-driven, innovative economy[2]. This announced restructuring of the world's second largest economy may become one of the globally most formative political projects of the 21st century, especially when accompanied with the predicted downgrade of the US as the world's largest economy in favour of China. I aim through extensive interviews to shed ethnographic light on the experiences and viewpoints of the people living in the midst of this process. The underlying, formative process that my informants are living in the midst of is one of individualisation in China, a society historically often referred to as collectivist. Based on my interviews of my informants we can see that individualisation as a transition process was encountered on two levels; in economic life and in social life. As key informant Zhao Yumei said it; "*Business is your working life. Marriage is your daily life… I hope! My generation does not have more to talk about. Their life is marriage, work and family, and that's what they talk about*". Zhao Yumei places her hope in marriage, as she is not yet married. In both economic and social life, individualisation comes today as the state retreats its omnipresence and no new collective stands ready to replace it. This is the process that my

[1] When I refer to China throughout this thesis, it will be The People's Republic of China (PRC). This must not be confused with The Republic of China (ROC), which will be referred to as Taiwan.

[2] Considering what Hu Jintao told the 18th Party Congress in November 2012: "*Major progress should be made in changing the growth model. On the basis of making China's development much more balanced, coordinated and sustainable, we should double its 2010 GDP and per capita income for both urban and rural residents. The contribution of scientific and technological progress to economic growth should increase considerably and China should become an innovative country. Industrialization should be basically accomplished*".

informants talked about, and that I will discuss in this thesis. Historically this means the transition from Mao's state-focused collectivism to Deng's economic liberalization policies.In everyday urban life in the era called radical Maoism[3] it was the *danwei* work unit that was the economic collective which the individual had to submit to. The transition from collectivism towards individualisation is the transition from state allocated economic rights and duties within the *danwei* to not having any corresponding economic collective today, as no form of employment in China bestows such extensive rights or duties upon its workers as the *danwei* did at the height of its political and economic importance. The individual is now the harbinger of his own success: The current economic freedom granted by the state is freedom to succeed and a corresponding freedom to fail. As everyone outside the highest echelons of the economic elite, the young urban professionals must navigate economic uncertainties, such as price inflation, Beijing's soaring real estate market, different welfare policies and their formal rights towards the state as a part of their daily-life economic experience. This opens for discussion and analysis of choice management; what objectives do young urban professionals pursue and what are the preferred strategies in this?

Through examining this based on ethnography, I will present some of the daily life concerns of young urban professionals, the approaches they employ to handle these concerns, and the rationale behind these approaches. The reorganisation of the Chinese political economy towards a Chinese capitalism is not just causing the individualisation of young urban professionals, it also provides many of the alternative answers to the challenges that young urban professionals must manoeuvre. The diversification of the Chinese economy presents several strains of strategic options. In these, the state's new policy of selectively exercised state ownership through the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), which have a *danwei* corporate legacy, is an important formative actor. The *danwei* predecessor of today's State Owned Enterprises might arguably be referred to as a total institution, following Goffmann (1959). Corinne-Barbara Francis states as a working assumption for her study of the reproduction of *danwei* corporate features that

> "the Chinese Communist *danwei* is an institution which embodies deeply embedded social, governmental and cultural practices and norms and that such institutions do not disappear easily but tend to reappear under new guises under new economic and political conditions." (Francis 1996, 841)

[3] Radical Maoism refers to the rule of Mao from the declaration of the People's Republic in 1949 to his death in 1976.

The word *danwei* is still used for employers, but the total institution *danwei* is today part of history. In sum these aspects of market freedom that dominates in economic life are also affecting social life. This has made clear to me by my informants by their constant referring to problems relating to social issues, particularly marriage. Young urbanites no longer need the approval of their employer to marry, as they did during the height of *danwei* influence. Also, the pre-revolution collective of the Confucian paternalist family has changed in fundamental ways. During Maoism the lineage based system was briefly attempted replaced by the imposition of socialist ideology. Rather than individual submission to the kin group the Communist Party wanted to create a socialist collectivism, expressed as "the People", again represented in urban everyday life by the *danwei*. This has changed. The tendencies towards individualisation following the retreat of the *danwei* are not as concerned with the ideological dimension of the transition from socialist class struggle to "socialism with a market economy", but represent processes within a market economy. Gone are the collective that guided the decisions of the individual, like the paternalist Confucian extended family or the total institution *danwei.* Instead the young urbanites in China are faced with new choices also in the social field, choices they have to make for themselves. This is reflected in my informants' talk about marriage, work and family; there are a plethora of choices to be made that following individualisation is now to be made by an individual where previously the collective would have had a say, and I have studied how individuals express concerns and hopes regarding these decisions. As linages and patriarchs no longer assert power over the choices of individuals, the individual is free to both succeed and fail. Individualisation does not imply that society does not enforce certain ideals on individuals; it implies that the enforcement is lessened. Chinese society may not be as family-oriented as it once was, but there is still a strong-felt expectation towards young people to marry, settle down and have *the* child that weigh on the minds of young urban professionals.

In both economic and social life the individual is therefore forced to take a stand on what constitutes a desirable job, what constitutes a desirable spouse, what constitutes success in life and when having identified such factors, the individual must decide how to obtain them. These are concerns that stand out as important to my informants, and in my conversations with them the young urban professionals constantly put emphasis on how to expand their skill base and work experience as well as reflecting on social issues, particularly how sexual relations play a role in their work-places, and ultimately how to find a spouse.

Who are the young urban professionals?

The emic side:

In a conversation corporate head-hunter Susan Long, whose job mainly consists of providing companies with suitable young urban professionals, told me: "*The ideal young urban professional has good education, speaks good English and has some experience or special training They should also have a good introduction letter giving a good self-presentation, showing passion and enthusiasm*". In general, my informants were comfortable with using the English term "young urban professionals" about themselves. Looking for a Chinese word for young urban professionals, several Chinese friends suggested *bailing*[4], meaning literally "white collar". *Bailing* is a loan word based on the English expression "white collar worker". No one ever suggested or mentioned Qing Zhang's phonetic loan word "*yapishi"*, a Sinification of the term "yuppies" (Zhang 2005, 436) Nuances of meaning might well be lost in translation between "white collar worker" in English and *bailing* in Chinese, so I asked one of my key informants, Chen Xiaomei, to tell me more about what *bailing* connotes in Chinese. Chen Xiaomei told me that *bailing* had entered popular usage about ten years ago, and was a loan word from English. The corresponding term "blue collar worker" has not been borrowed; its Chinese equivalent would be *gongren*[5] (worker). A separation is made within the State Owned Enterprises for who is a *bailing* or not; SOE employees can be *bailing*, but the officials in an SOE would just be referred to as officials, not *bailing*. To be a *bailing*, one must work in a big company, preferably an international one, she said. Also, one must hold at least a bachelor degree. The fact that Chen Xiaomei said "preferably an international one" suggests that some *bailing* can be more *bailing* than others. The average salary of a *bailing* would be 15 000 yuan[6] a month, and one does not qualify for being *bailing* if one makes less than 8000, she continued. If you make more than 20 000 per month, one can be called *jinling*, meaning "golden collar". Running Chen Xiaomei's definition of *bailing* by another key informant, Linda Wei, the latter agreed on all points, save for pointing out that *jinling* is internet slang. Linda explained that although internet slang words are well known, one rarely use these in everyday oral speech. *Jinling* is, according to this informant, a narrower term than *bailing.*

Chen Xiaomei added a final detail of interest: all the salary categories mentioned

[4] 白领
[5] 工人
[6] XE currency converter gives the following exchange rates: 100 Chinese Yuan (CNY/RMB) is approximately 101 NOK, 16,5 USD or 12 Euro. (www.xe.com, accessed 15.12.2013).

above should be official, "white" salary. "White salary" means that off-the-books income is not counted, and in Beijing, with all its corporate headquarters, government entities and national supervising bodies, the "grey" income one may add to one's official salary through doing "favours" to "friends" can easily exceed several times one's "white", on-paper income. The term "grey" here is also emic: a separation is made between being corrupt and making favours, between receiving gifts and taking bribes. Mafia in China is called *hei shihui*, black society, making grey the semi-legal middle ground between organised crime (black) and lawfulness (white). An expat I talked to recounted that a Chinese friend of his told him: "*My father is a clean official. He doesn't take bribes. Well, not bribes over 10,000 yuan. Obviously he takes gift cards and those kinds of things under 10,000 yuan, because if he didn't take those, none of the other officials would trust him.*" The separation between black and grey is not stringent and rests on no coherent definition; there is no apparent reason why exactly 10,000 per bribe should be the limit between necessary group conformity and corruption, as the official's son implied above. The distinction between black and grey seems rather arbitrary and this arbitrariness is a headache for corruption-hunters in China: how expensive a watch can a CEO give his new friend, the Police Commissioner, for his birthday before it is a bribe? This part of business in Beijing is not unknown to the young urban professionals I talked to. Accountant Francis Wang told me that "*in Beijing, it's harder to bribe your way. Things are more regulated*[7] *here*." Corruption is somewhat beside the point here: the point to be made here is merely that the *bailing* must make at least 8000 a month in official income. As a context for this number it can be mentioned that the average income in Beijing is 5223 Yuan per month[8]. The financial side of being *bailing* can be summarised in two points. Firstly, the minimum one must earn in order to be *bailing* is nearly twice the average salary, so - *bailing* is well-paid. Secondly, for *bailing* status only "white", legitimate income is counted. This adds an interesting moral dimension to *bailing* status. I should add here that this description of the emic requirements for being *bailing* does not make a perfect match with what I found among my informants. They generally matched the education description, but not necessarily the salary part.

The etic side

Young urban professionals became a point of discussion when 1984 was declared year of the yuppie by Newsweek magazine. The term yuppie was a media buzz word that American

[7] The informant used the word *biaozhun*, a multi-faceted term. A suggested translation is discussed below.
[8] http://www.chinaabout.net/beijing-2012-average-monthly-salary-reached-5223-yuan-us-836/.

sociology had to confront as yuppies were believed to become an unstoppable force in American politics:

> "The media has reported the emergence of a new political species: the Young Urban Professionals, children of the baby boom who now have college degrees and high-paying jobs. […] A leading newsweekly proclaimed 1984 their "year" (Newsweek, 1984) and declared that they were becoming the dominant political and cultural force in American society." (Hammond 1986, 487)

The yuppie "political species" was predicted to become "the dominant political and cultural force" in the US, but the concept had its glory days towards the end of the eighties and in early nineties, thereafter fading from political and cultural analysis. Its decline in popularity may be because the mainly ascribed identity group called yuppie was criticized on analytical grounds for having a too "amorphous" definition (Carpini and Sigelman 1986, 517). In media, the yuppies was considered a very potent and influential political segment, but researchers in political science disagreed: Carpini and Sigelman critizises "the media attention that was lavished on the emergence of young urban professionals, or "yuppies," as a political force." (Carpini and Sigelman 1986, 502). John Hammond applied "anyone born after 1945 with a college degree" as a loose definition of yuppies, which was clearly too general to analyse from. By adding income and occupational variables, the yuppie segment fell to "a mere 1,1 percent" of the 1983 General Social Survey (Hammond 1986, 492). This showed that when definition of yuppies was made less vague and therefore more relevant for political analysis, the category was so heavily decimated that they could not be the political earthquake they were being sold as, and therefore less relevant for political analysis; which can explain why "the rise of the yuppies" are no longer cover stories on *Newsweek* magazine.

Yuppies may have lost its importance in American sociology, but the term emerges in contemporary discussions on China. In a contribution to a wider debate on modernity in China, Fenggang Yang observes that "anthropologists have observed that a new class of yuppies in China has embraced the company [McDonalds] as a means of connecting to the world (Yang 2005, 438) Among the more extensive anthropological contributions on yuppies is Friederike Fleischer's book *Suburban Beijing (2010)* Focusing on conspicuous consumption in housing, Fleischer uses "chuppies[9]", a short form for Chinese young urban professionals, as a social categorisation of the strata she studies (Fleischer 2010, xv, 58) alas without providing a stringent definition. As no definitions of "chuppies" are being provided, it is hard to see how

[9] I put "Chuppies" in scare quotes but not yuppies, as yuppie is in fact a dictionary indexed word, for instance in www.dictionary.cambridge.org. (Accessed 22.10.2013).

"chuppie" avoids the problem of no concise definition, the problem that saw the yuppie approach discarded from sociology in the US. The question of transferability of the term yuppie/"chuppie" also arises when a word coined to describe an American political trend in the eighties are being used in describing China today. The reason yuppies were to be seen as a political force was their perceived political unity, stemming from a similar background. Hammond writes:

> "The huge birth cohorts of the baby boom were said to share some important formative experiences: childhoods of prosperity, high educational levels, and now, occupational attainments and salaries which match their ambitions." (Hammond 1986, 487)

The formative experience that Hammond lists that fits China the least is "childhoods of prosperity"; the average university graduate in China today had most likely not a prosperous childhood, compared to an American age mate. The transferability of this assumption to China was even more inappropriate when Hammond made the argument in 1986: a 22 year old graduate in 1986 would be born in 1964, just three years after the "three hard years[10]", when tens of millions starved to death in a man-made famine, and two years before the beginning of the "ten years of chaos[11]". Still Zhu, Zhao and Li compares young political radicals in China to American "yuppies" as early as 1990, with their only reservation being that yuppies in the US was generally politically conservatives, thereby applying the term yuppie to people who grew up during or right after the Cultural Revolution (Zhu, Zhao, and Li 1990). A 22 year old graduate in 2012 would be born in 1990, when the Chinese economy was in no state to provide childhoods of prosperity to everyone. Granted, the prosperity of a childhood in the nineties in China greatly exceeds that of a childhood in the seventies, but there are no indications that the "chuppies" that Fleischer studied or the young urban professionals I have studied shared childhoods of prosperity that in any way can be compared to the American childhoods of prosperity in the fifties and sixties that Hammond calls a formative experience for the American yuppie. Concluding the etic side of studying young urban professionals; they have been treated as a group earlier, mainly in the discussion about yuppies, but as a category young urban professionals is a diamond in the rough as there are problems concerning definition; the lack of a concise definition led to the demise of yuppie

[10] Acknowledging that the Great Leap Forward (1958-60) was not a great leap forward, the famine years of 1959-61 are now referred to as Three Hard Years, for instance in Ren (2013, xi).

[11] Historians dispute when the Cultural Revolution ended; Mao declared it over in 1969 when the army intervened to end the most violent phase and restore some degree of order, yet Mao referred to it as unfinished as late as June 1976 (Schoppa 2010, chapter 18) . I have seen the period from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 to Mao's death in 1976 referred to as Ten Years of Chaos in China.

relevance in political science and sociology. Earlier debates on young urban professionals focused on the political role of the US yuppie and there are assumptions about shared yuppie background that cannot be transferred to Chinese young urban professionals.

What are the concerns of the young urban professional? A selection of themes.

As I have stated above, my main material is based on my interviews of the young urban professions. These interviews are presented in chapters 3 and 4, and show what type of concerns this group of people articulated during our conversations. Generally these concerns were two types – first about the economic issues, mostly in relation to their work and second, about social issues, particularly the issue of marriage. Related to the economic sphere of life, many concerns of young urban professionals found a suggested answer through the workplace.

Chinese companies versus international companies

A key concern was the difference between Chinese enterprises on one side and international companies on the other. "Chinese" companies rarely refers to ownership but to corporate culture; whether the company has a cultural approach to business that the informants label "Chinese", or not. Thus "Chinese," when used to describe companies, becomes an adjective loaded with meaning, and young urban professionals expressed scepticism towards the Chinese cultural sphere of business. International companies were praised for having no office politics. In international companies there is supposedly no "face games" where leaders demand recognition of their hierarchical superiority from employers who must "give face" to their leaders. Key informant Zhao Yumei told me that *"Chinese companies are dictatorships, just as the political hierarchy".* In international companies, there is no need to build the networks of interpersonal relations, *guanxi*, that are considered omnipresent in China by both China scholars and Chinese themselves. The *zhongjian*, "doctrine of the mean", originally a concept from Confucian teachings on the virtue of moderation, was used to describe the caution one must exercise in a corporate environment dominated by distrust, alliance-making, scheming and backstabbing. Alliances can be made in many ways: "*In a company there are always women willing to sleep with bosses*", key informant Hannah Liu told me, and ambitious men who cannot sleep their way up the career ladder seeks to apply other measures: "*Seniors might get backstabbed. Juniors just work. Smart juniors would kiss ass and drink with the boss*", Hannah commented.

State Owned Enterprises, a door to "peiyang" and "hukou".

Young urban professionals stated their disgruntlement with this emphasis on social networking skills over professional skills, opening for discussing the tension between *guanxi* and meritocracy as mutually exclusive modes of corporate organisation. Valuing *guanxi* or social skills over professional skills is something that earns companies the label as "Chinese" in terms of corporate culture. No companies are considered more "Chinese" than the State Owned Enterprises, often stemming from the Maoist total institution called *danwei.* By many observers mistakenly believed to be in demise, the State Owned Enterprises exert great influence on business in China. There are several desirable outcomes of SOE employment that young urban professionals must consider in order to strategize towards desired outcomes. The SOEs might be "Chinese" in the corporate culture sense, placing greater emphasis on connections than ability, but they offer a job stability aspect that is considered highly desirable. This enhanced job stability is considered especially auspicious for women, who should not have a too demanding job. For young urban professionals, the State Owned Enterprises are the most likely source of obtaining *peiyang,* a form of corporate grooming that I will argue should be viewed in light of the debate on the role of *suzhi,* "human quality" in China. Employment in the SOEs is also the most likely path to obtain a Beijing *hukou,* the very important certificate of citizenship to Beijing that is the prerequisite for access to welfare goods in Beijing. As we will see, the *hukou* is considered very important in contemporary China. For those without a Beijing *hukou,* the insurance provided by their employer are their main economic safety net, replacing the function of the *danwei* under Maoism and the patriarchal kin group before that. The retreat of state welfare obligations towards the individual presents great insecurity in how to manoeuvre to secure one's position. This concern extends beyond the corporate realm, as young urban professionals express political concerns related to the marketization of welfare services as well as social concerns such as the importance of marriage (for the unmarried).

The importance of marriage

Social issues are also commented upon and among the issues brought by the informants issues related to marriage take on a special importance. Marriage is discussed as its meaning is contested; ranging from instrumental marriages where the wife gets a breadwinner while the husband gets the necessity to continue the family line, to "naked marriages" where love overcomes lacking the socially prescribed material prerequisites of a marriage, such as housing. The power relation between husband and wife is discussed as husbands fear to be rivalled by their wives, while wives fear being replaced by mistresses, a male symbol of

prestige. This provides concern towards beauty; key informant Annie Huang told me that Chinese women fear ageing as their husband might find a second wife, and therefore refrain from breast feeding their one child, pampered in all other ways due to being the carrier of all hope for two family lines. As there is a considerable social pressure to have children, young urban professionals express such strong-felt disapproval of the education system that their eventual children will have to pass through that two female informants said they would rather not have children than to raise one in China. The need to bribe children into kindergartens through "gifts" to the staff is mentioned as a reason to immigrate to the US by one young urban professional. In total, young urban professionals navigates numerous concerns which upon further investigation might provide insights regarding their experience of participating in the contemporary Chinese capitalist economy.

Individualisation and strategies for constructing the successful self

Having discussed what the term young urban professionals might mean, and what their major concerns are, we should look more closely into what the process of individualization they are involved in might mean as well. When attempting to approach Chinese capitalism by studying how young urban professionals strategize to achieve what they hold to be success, a socio-historical context concerning the idea of success should be presented, and also how the notion of success affects the Self of my informants. The idea of a successful Self is strongly connected to ideas about the social Self. China has traditionally been considered a collectivist society, where being part of a larger unit is central to the identity of the individual. Before the communist takeover this unit was the family. Francis Hsü (1971) has pointed out how the traditional ideal household, with several generations living under the same roof, led by the oldest male relative, provided an atmosphere that gave collective social identity prominence over individual identities. Thereafter the CCP rejected the perceived feudal traits of patriarchal paternalism and aimed to create a new collectivist identity based on belonging to the communist People, who should exercise collective ownership over all means of production. A profound interplay between a collectivist economic structure and a collectivist social identity was an important aim in Chinese socialism. Eating out of the common pot or rather, eating in the collective canteen demanded a day-to-day submission to the group with no real alternative. The collectivist focus of radical Maoism with its focus on individual sacrifice for the greater good resonated with the earlier ethic of individual submission that Confucian paternalism demanded. But things were to change. When Deng Xiaoping's reforms started to dismantle the economic collectives of radical Maoism, the rural People's

Communes collective farms as well as the urban *danwei* industrial complexes, the political collectivism of radical Maoism disappeared but with no clear ideological strategy to take over. The economic reforms created a space in which the new economic, political and family structure all put extensive pressure on the individual to find his or her own way in life.A plethora of recent literature aims to shed light to this on-going process of individualisation in China. Among the most notable contributions is Yan Yunxiang's *The Individualization of Chinese Society*. Yan comments that:

> […] the ethics of everyday life shifted from an emphasis on self-sacrifice and hard work for a greater goal, such as building the new socialist society, to a new focus on self-realization and pursuit of personal happiness in concrete and materialistic terms. In other words, what makes one's life meaningful has changed from a collective ethics to an individual-centered ethics, similar to the shift from "being good" to "feeling good" observed in US society (Yan 2009, xxxv)

The new ethics of everyday life in China focus on the dual goals of self-realisation and pursuit of personal happiness, and both aspects are pointed at by my informants. Thus I need to focus on the emerging ideal of pursuing personal happiness that Yan argues is receiving prominence in "the ethics of everyday life". This transition from a collective ethics to an individual-centred ethics seems to partly follow generational divides, as Yan documents how the lament about the immoral selfishness of the upcoming, more individualised generation is not unfamiliar to contemporary China (Yan 2009). The driving forces of individualisation is here that social and historical processes isolate the individual in new ways, while simultaneously telling the individual that life is no longer made meaningful by adapting to a greater fellowship, but by self-realisation and pursuing a notion of happiness. Unfortunately happiness is an elusive concept, difficult to define philosophically and probably more difficult to compare in terms of inter-subjectivity, in both etic and emic perspective. This frequently makes people quite ironically look to others when wondering where to look for their own individual happiness, making happiness a phenomenon swept in emotions and individual experience that is highly individual, while simultaneously having socially negotiated aspects. Erving Goffman's (1959) theory about social life as a screenplay may here be integrated with Richard Jenkins' (Jenkins 1996) work on social identity as based on ascription and self-ascription. If your social performance demonstrates what society agrees should provide happiness then you will be ascribed happiness from others, an ascription that might be internalised to become self-ascription, convincing you that you are indeed experiencing happiness.

Absence of happiness is frequently explained as caused by lacking something else, be it the lack of money, status, position, popularity, health, sex, love, not having children, having daughters but no son, not having been on pilgrimage to Mecca (if you are a Muslim), not having an expensive Canada Goose windbreaker, not having a BMW, not having the measures of a model or the abs of an athlete. For those who feel happiness is missing, it can often be phrased as "if only…" This follows cultural norms: In traditional China with its strict patrilineal descent, it would be agreed upon that a married couple with five daughters are truly unfortunate, lacking a son to be happy. An involuntary childless couple in a different cultural setting, for instance the US, would give their right hands for their five daughters. The conditions for happiness also follows historical context: there are no longer anyone in China that curse their luck for having inherited a bad class label from their parents, while once upon a time in China class labels were the basis for distributing scarce resources; Stockman mentions the disgruntlement of offspring from bad class technical experts towards the children of good class political cadres when the latter tended to be favoured in access to the education system (Stockman 2000, 134).

The new consumer-oriented capitalist market economy in China seems to fetishize individuality by making it something that must be expressed through consumption. As the individual can construct itself as successful through owning prestige objects, I asked Hannah Liu about what constitutes prestige objects. She told me that "*prestige comes from the money paid and the public recognition, like the artist's reputation. If you buy a painting with no public recognition and you did not pay big money, there's little or no prestige in owning it. There is no intrinsic prestige in quality art. You can get lots of prestige from a shit piece of art if it is expensive shit from a famous person. That gives lots of prestige*. The market makes items prominent answers to the "if only"-questions individuals hold, trying to convince teenagers with perfectly functioning Samsung cell phones that true happiness is an iPhone 5. I asked Chen Xiaomei what rich people in China showed their wealth through: *"For men, it is expensive cars like Mercedes, BMWs… you know, cars like that which looks expensive, or luxury goods like fancy watches. For women, it is Chanel",* she said with a theatrical posh hand gesture. In China, conspicuous consumption is conceptually connected to the new market economy; while before the central planning economy had little luxury to offer. The larger point to be made here is that individualisation is an increasingly relevant context for understanding China. This also goes for my informants, both in their economic roles as well as their social roles. Based on their own formulations we can point at several concepts made use of by my informants to talk about the various forms of individualization.

Peiyang: corporate grooming

One of the concepts that my informants repeatedly discussed was *peiyang.* Ironically, I only realised this towards the end of the field work when I did an extensive interview in Chinese with my wife as a backup interpreter, as her command of Mandarin exceeds mine. After I encountered *peiyang* as a concept in Chinese, I asked most of the English-speaking informants about it as well. *Peiyang* was presented as the sum of the training provided in a company and the internal career mobility of a company. The emphasis placed on good *peiyang* reveals something about the outlook of young urban professionals: they feel compelled to continue improving themselves and are concerned about career mobility, aiming to keep climbing the ladder. Key informant Linda Wei showed how *peiyang* should be seen as a means to and ends when she commented: "*If I get a good salary, I don't' care about what opportunities the company can offer me*". A point of interest here is whether Linda refers to both training and internal career mobility when saying "opportunities". There is reason to believe that she refers to the latter only, as the concern of receiving training is connected to the influential concept of *suzhi* in a way that internal career mobility is not. A multi-faceted term with no apparent equivalent in English, s*uzhi* is a notion of quality that the Party has politicised. Kipnis translates the original meaning of *suzhi* as "the unadorned nature or character of something" (Kipnis 2006: 297). Its usage took on a new meaning when the Communist Party started blaming insufficient *renkou suzhi,* a too low *"*population quality", for keeping China from modernising (Anagnost 2004). As Vanessa Fong (2006) argues, *suzhi* is best gained by education and I argue that the concern for *peiyang* comes from a desire to keep educating oneself also after graduation. If offered a good enough salary, Linda might forgo career development, but not receiving extra training in the workplace would mean an end to raising *suzhi* through continued education.

Social connections in China: Guanxi

While *peiyang* as an emic term was only encountered towards the end of my field work, *guanxi* was introduced at the very start, as several informants asked me during our first interview if I was familiar with *guanxi.* Where *peiyang*, a word hard to translate directly, was never used as a Chinese word in English conversations until I had brought it up, the word *guanxi,* also a word hard to translate directly, was frequently used in conversations going in English. The concern for *guanxi* is a pressing one, as Zhao Yumei related *guanxi* to nothing less than happiness in life: "*Without guanxi, one can most likely not live an easy life. If you*

have no guanxi, but high nengli [ability[12]] *you have a chance, but a slim one. The pressure is high; think of the high suicide rates among graduates, who have high nengli"*. *Guanxi* could be referred to also without using the word explicitly, but relation to the concept remained obvious even if a word like "connections" were used: When I asked Hannah Liu if there was a Chinese dream similar to the American dream[13], she said: "*The Chinese dream is to get connected. Even ayis[14]* [housekeepers] *need connections. Haven't you seen people sleeping on the street or in train stations? That's unconnected villagers. The police will send squatters home, so if you have no connections in Beijing that you can stay with, they'll send you back and the money spent on the train ticket to Beijing will be wasted."* My informants never attempted to produce a stringent definition of *guanxi*, as that would be an etic rather than emic concern. As an applied emic concept, the centrality of *guanxi* can be seen in how *guanxi* keeps occurring as an explaining factor. When I for instance asked about how young urban professionals spend money, Hannah Liu told met "*They eat out a lot. They don't cook at home, unless they have kids. Eating out is partly a guanxi thing. You eat out with colleagues and friends from university studies or high school classmates, who become one child policy substitute cousins*". Xiangqun Chang writes that "*guanxi* seems to have become an important notion and a general analytic concept for the understanding of social exchange and relationships in Chinese society" (Chang 2010, 453). The broadness of the term *guanxi* is a headache to China scholars: Kuang-kuo Hwang[15] has presented *guanxi* as three types of relationships: the expressive tie, the instrumental tie and the mixed tie" (Hwang 1987). According to Chang, Ambrose King divided *guanxi* into social exchange (social *guanxi)* and economic exchange (economic *guanxi).* (Chang 2010, 454). Due to the broad scope of the term, it is difficult to summarise my informants' view on *guanxi,* but seemed that economic *guanxi,* or the instrumental tie, was dominant over social *guanxi.* Annie Huang said to me that "*in Beijing, it is hard to make real friends in a bar. People don't trust each other in Beijing. Most people who have moved to Beijing do not plan on growing old here anyway*.". Arthur Kleinman notes that individualisation seems debase an established balance between the instrumental and the expressive tie:

[12] 能力
[13] Here referring to the dream of starting with two empty hands and working one's way to becoming a respected self-made man; the idea that anyone can make it in America.
[14] Ayi (阿姨) literally is the term for aunt, father's younger sister. It is a polite form of addressing an older woman if she seems younger than your father.
[15] Also known as Huang Guanggao when transliterated by the *pinyin* system.

> "The new stream of individualistic orientation and self-fashioning brings with it to the fore the material desires and practises of consumerism. It also brings an egocentric pragmatism in personal relationships that alters ties long considered to be based in cultural ethics towards a troubling "you-scratch-my-back-I-scratch-yours" pattern that can propel corruption" (Kleinman: foreword in Yan 2009,xxi).

As people do not come to Beijing to make new friends, social *guanxi* seems subjected to economic concerns. So and Walker has argued that economic *guanxi* and social *guanxi* should not be set in opposition to each other;

> "[…] *guanxi* represents the totality of the relationship between two persons. It is impossible to differentiate between the affective aspects of friendship and the utilitarian aspects of the business relationship. When one aspect ends so will the other." (So and Walker 2006, 6)

Annie Huang made some reflections that run in the same vein: "*As you grow older you adopt a more instrumental view on friendship, more business-like. You consider what you and the other party can bring to the table. The friends one makes when one is young are the true friends*". Annie here implies that if a relation is too dominated by the instrumental tie, the relation cannot be called true friendship. Noteworthy, she says that true friends are made when young, and as she is in her mid-twenties "young" here would mean before adulthood, when one has less of an economic instrumentalist agenda. The importance of instrumentalist *guanxi* was frequently commented upon by my informants, who expressed a critical stance towards the importance of having connections and the gains that can be made from manipulating connections. Young urban professionals clearly would prefer professional ability to play a larger role over having the right connections, while simultaneously cannot neglect to cultivate *guanxi* of their own, due to its importance. It should here be mentioned that *guanxi* can be *peiyang* corporate grooming if the employer actively seeks to equip the employee with social connections.

The importance of Beijing

As a group being successful in the new China it is also of importance to the young urban professionals where they are. They have their preferred type of places, and the key place to be for a young urban professional is Beijing. Although my informants also were critical to what went on in their city of residence there is little doubt that Beijing is important. This must be understood in view of the central role held by China's capital city in the national imaginary. Friedrike Fleischer explains that the geographical fixation that followed the implementation of the *hukou* system (to be explained below) in the Maoist era created a "national development

hierarchy with Beijing at the top" (Fleischer 2007, 298). Louisa Schein has commented that urbanity is "an artefact of popular cultural production and consumption in post-Mao China" (Schein 2001, 225). Read together, Schein's observation about urbanity as an artefact of popular cultural production and consumption works with Fleischer's observation that there is no place in China considered more developed, hence more modern, than Beijing. If urbanity is a good, then Beijing has more of it than any other city, and the current rate of urbanisation in China suggests that people indeed want urbanity. Fleischer criticizes Schein, who writes about "imagined cosmopolitanism", for approaching urban modernity as a dream that all can share: "imagined cosmopolitanism" then becomes

> "[…] an almost egalitarian notion since even window shoppers can dream that they take part in the new global consumer culture. In contrast, I would maintain that the growing integration of China into global economic flows is an ever more important aspect of how Chinese society is stratified today " (Fleischer 2007, 300).

Stornes' (2012) study among un- or underemployed university graduates in Beijing is relevant to this discussion regarding how imagined the cosmopolitanism of imagined cosmopolitanism can be. Stornes finds that just living in Beijing is considered such a success that it counterweights unemployment or underemployment, making a living doing odd jobs in an illegal settlement at the fringe of Beijing (Stornes 2012). The young urban professionals I got to know were indeed able to consume Beijing cosmopolitanism, living within the fourth ring road[16] and having done well at the job market. Their cosmopolitanism certainly did come with constraints, primarily financial ones. When I referred to a super-trendy (and rather over-priced) bar I had been invited too, Linda Wei giggled and said "*I only go to that place if I'm treating company guests with the company's credit card*". As I will return to, my informants and I did not visit each other's homes, but met on a specific kind of neutral ground. Although Beijing is considered the peak of urbanity, as Fleischer argues above, the preferred places of young urban professionals would be focused on the consuming Beijing's cosmopolitanism rather than consuming Beijing. No one ever suggested outings to quintessential Beijing scenery such as the Summer Palace, the Great Wall or Jingshan Park. Instead, we would meet in restaurants,

[16] I noticed how centrality in Beijing often correlates with desirability. Centrality, and with it, desirability is conceived in concentric layers following the ring roads, centered at the Forbidden City. This would make southern inner Beijing (say, within the 3rd ring) more desirable than southern outer Beijing (outside the 3rd ring). People would often ask about whether an address was inside or outside the nearest ring road, and inner seemed to be held in higher esteem than outer.

bars and coffee shops. If we ever ventured into the Beijing trademark hutongs[17], it was only the recently renovated, trendy hutong areas such as Gulou and Wudaoying hutong, where a bar, café or restaurant with a satisfactory degree of cosmopolitanism could be found. Cosmopolitanism is not only found in renovated hutongs. In Beijing, fancy restaurants can be found in shopping malls as they market the same cosmopolitanism to the same target group. Between a Ralph Lauren perfumery and a Maybelline makeup boutique there was a fancy, but affordable seafood restaurant, south China style that one of my informants decided I needed to experience. Affordable is a key word here, as conspicuous consumption comes with financial constraints for ordinary young urban professionals. With the vast amount of fancy restaurants, cafes and bars that Beijing offers and the various preferences of my informants, I was rarely taken to the same place twice. If I were to suggest where to meet, I had a limited repertoire of places that I liked and that I was confident my informants would like too. Comparing to studies I've read touching upon cosmopolitanism in Beijing I could discern a hierarchy of cosmopolitanism, as the informants of Stornes (2012) viewed a noodle soup hard-seat diner as a cosmopolitan experience because of its American fast-food inspiration: I firmly believe that my informants would not have their appetite for cosmopolitanism saturated by such a venue. That's not to say that the strata my informants belonged to would never eat there; they might drop by for a quick and convenient meal to saturate non-metaphorical, physical hunger. Following the hierarchy of cosmopolitanism, a noodle soup fast-food diner would not be a place my informants would bring a friend (or a field working anthropology student); it would not have a sufficient air of cosmopolitanism to it. I did ask some of my informants if they had any guidelines for how to pick restaurants when treating others, and they provided some basic guidelines on the art of treating in China. I asked this in order to investigate what made an appropriate venue, but the answer given focused interestingly much more on finding the appropriate amount to spend: not too little, as that would be insulting, and not too much, for then the other party would be unable to reciprocate, causing embarrassment. Interestingly, the rules of thumb regarding appropriate spending were much more articulate than the rules of thumb defining an appropriate venue: "I would take people to a decent place, maybe a little bit expensive". Both "a decent place" and "a little bit expensive" are not very precise descriptions, but upon further inquiry the definition of "a little bit expensive" turned out to be 100 kuai per person, 150-200 for the more important events. What "a decent place" would

[17] Hutong (胡同) translates into «alleys» and are features of old Beijing. Unfortunately many hutongs have been demolished to pave way for concrete, glass and steel high-rises. Most of the remaining hutongs are now listed as cultural heritage and therefore protected.

mean was not explained further. When I later in the conversation mentioned that I had been taken to the Imperial Manchu Restaurant by another informant, this particulate restaurant was held out as a good place to treat guests; "my former boss always treated guests there". That the Imperial Manchu restaurant was sufficiently cosmopolitanism yet sufficiently could be deducted from the fact that I was taken there by a young urban professional in the first place, but I had acquired sufficient yet rudimentary "silent knowledge" to recognise the restaurant as that kind of place that appealed to young urban professionals, albeit being too much of a novice to be able to articulate why. Since social conceptualisation of space was not the focal point in my field work, I did not pursue this lead and therefore offer no closer definition that "a decent place" other than relating it to the literature discussing the importance of experiencing cosmopolitanism, as referred to above. I argue that cosmopolitanism and conspicuous consumption are strongly interrelated in Beijing as a part of the conspicuous consumption is precisely consuming the cosmopolitanism of an international metropolis.

Methodology: an interview-oriented field work

This thesis is based on a six months anthropological field work in Beijing, China. My wife Camilla Aasen Bøe and I conducted separate anthropological field works simultaneously from august 2012 to early march 2013. Prior to the field work we took a leave of one semester from the University of Bergen to study mandarin at the department of intensive studies at Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU). While studying at BLCU we chose to live in a potential field site in western Beijing (Xicheng shi), just outside the second ring road. However, several practical reasons made us change address to Dongsi hutong area in eastern central Beijing when the field work started. Where we lived wouldn't have influenced my field work among young urban professionals since we would always meet on neutral ground. They did not visit our home, we did not visit theirs; this will be discussed further below. Moving did save me a lot of trouble commuting, as the preferred neutral ground often were on or close to eastern metro line 10, such as Sanlitun/Tuanjiehu or Central Business District area. (Guomao).

I got in touch with my informants mainly through the snowballing method. I quickly discovered that free time was a scarce resource for young urban professionals. So after being introduced, in several cases I sensed it wiser to ask if they could help me with my master's degree by meeting me for an interview, rather than suggesting just hanging out. My informants were very empathic towards my cause as they themselves have been grinded through the Chinese education mill. Although I had studied mandarin before coming to China

and spent another six months studying prior to the field work, nearly all my interviews were conducted in English, as my informants' command of English vastly exceeded my command of Mandarin. Knowing some mandarin was occasionally still useful, as the example in the vignette to chapter one demonstrates. An initial challenge proved to be to conduct an interview with person I had met only once or twice before, often briefly and in a larger social setting, and then make the interview just so formal that the other party did not feel I was wasting their time, but casual and relaxed enough to establish a personal relation so that they would agree to meet me again. Luckily I was able to work out this balance quite well with most of my informants, securing a base of key informants that I could meet on a regular basis. This is somewhat reversed to the impression I have gained of a typical anthropological field work, where one would socialize first and bring out the note book later. Only towards the end of the field work did I feel comfortable enough to ask key informants just to "hang out" rather than asking for an interview for my master thesis. At first I worried that this meant poor field access and that my informants were treating me as a stranger, keeping me at a comfortable distance that I needed to overcome in order to conduct a fruitful field work. Sawa Kurotani (2004) encountered a similar problem in her field work about Japanese business wives in the US and wrote an interesting methodological article problematizing what is "proper" social anthropological access. Kurotani was initially frustrated that she was only allowed to partake in short lapses of leisure time with her informants, far from the Malinowskian anthropological ideal of living in their huts and eating their food. Initially suffering the same disappointment, having read Kurotani before going into the field helped me come to a similar realisation as Kurotani eventually did: by partaking in social interaction the same way as her informants did, Kurotani ended up knowing her informants as they knew each other (Kurotani 2004). If Erving Goffman's (1959) classic theory of approaching social interaction as a screenplay is applied to Kurotani's work, Kurotani's frustration was to never see her informants interact in a back-stage setting, as their interactions was front-stage performance only. The interesting point to be taken is that this was not because of insufficient access, but because of the nature of the relationships between her informants. Similarly, I was frustrated by lack of back-stage access as I was meeting my informants one at the time in cafes and restaurants, having asked explicitly if they would meet me for an interview.

In hindsight, this can serve as grounds for some reflections about social relations in contemporary China. Due to its massive growth the recent years Beijing is a city of strangers, which sets its mark upon social life in Beijing. I asked some of my informants about their

social life, and the connection was made explicitly by one of them: "I don't go out much, maybe once a month. It depends on how much stress there is at work and on money. I have many "friends" from partner companies on *weixin*[18] and stay in touch with people there instead of going out. Also, remember I'm not from here. Originally I had no network in Beijing".

In my worst fears early in the field work, I imagined that there was an abundance of Tupperware parties and movie nights hosted in people's homes that a talented field worker in Beijing would gain access to within the first two weeks of the field work, but that I failed to gain access to, making me a hopeless anthropologist. As the field work unfolded, I came to realize that this was not so as I saw close, long-term friends prefer to interact on neutral ground rather than in the more intimate, back-stage setting of one's home. The long-term presence of the field worker will expose "silent knowledge, and I obtained some insights concerning the preferred places of young urban professionals through being introduced to that kind of places by my informants; even though extensive interviews was my main mode of operation I learned something about the places of young urban professionals. My informants and I did not visit each other's homes, instead we met on neutral, but not random ground; appropriate meeting places for young urban professionals are subject to some kind of screening process that I could sense the contours of. Had my field work been more oriented towards the social use of space, I might have asked my informants to articulate this, but I did not. Another reason that my one-on-one interview mode was to some degree representative of social life in Beijing is the observation that young urbanites in Beijing rarely actively scramble together large groups of people for leisure, making me meeting my informants mostly one at the time more representative for the social life of my informants. In a Chinese birthday party I was invited to, hosted in an Italian restaurant we were six guests, not counting the host. The host was born and raised in Beijing and could probably easily found a hundred acquaintances to invite, but Chinese social life is not so. Providing interesting grounds for comparison, I was invited to an expat's birthday party the weekend after, which had closer to fifty guests. When I mentioned this to one of my informants, she commented: "Chinese count close friends when they invite, westerners include acquaintances. Spending time with acquaintances is more of a business thing to me". Something that should be mentioned here is that the Chinese host paid for everything for all the guests as Chinese custom dictates, while

[18] A Chinese micro-messaging service often explained or referred to as "Chinese Twitter" despite certain minor differences. A major difference to Twitter is that *Weixin* is subject to government censorship.

in the expat's party the mainly foreign guests were prepared to cover their own costs in full. In brief, the factors that made my field work depend greatly on one to one interviews is that leisure time is a scarce resource for young urban professionals, neutral ground is preferred for meeting places and larger group situations are rarely initiated, even for celebrations; as Kurotani, I interacted with my informants similar to how they would interact with each other.

The organization of the thesis

In chapter one I will provide a brief and incomplete overview of the economic history of modern China as this is a vital context to understanding the political history of the People's Republic, moving to focus on the institutional history of employment and public welfare
In chapter two I will aim to clarify the historical approach of the CCP towards the family, both under radical Maoism and in the reform era.
In chapter three I show how my informants relate to the capitalist economy in contemporary China, discussing the importance of *guanxi* and the disapproval of young urban professionals towards the importance of *guanxi* in contemporary China, a symptom of a greater scepticism towards a culturally Chinese approach to business where the international companies provide a safe haven. I will move on to discuss what makes a good job and how the SOEs, the most culturally Chinese of Chinese companies, fit in here. I will finish this discussion of the experience of Chinese capitalism by looking at how the disappointments of young urban professionals are voiced both in relation to marketization of welfare and in relation to the over-development of Beijing, the promised land within China.
In chapter four I will discuss concerns that young urban professionals hold concerning social life, particularly marriage and gender.
In chapter five I will present a summary discussion of young urban professionals, discussing how an ongoing process of individualisation in contemporary China can be found in both economic and social life, before moving on to discuss if young urban professionals can be approached as a class.

CHAPTER 1: From *danwei* socialism to capitalist State Owned Enterprises: the importance of economic organization in new China

Since the various stages of the political project of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is highly influential on any attempt to understand China, firstly understanding the political projects of the CCP is immensely helpful. An important tool to understanding the CCP political project is found by applying the economic history of modern China as an historical context. Modern China is by historians often counted from signing of the Nanjing treaty in 1842, the first humiliation of China by foreign powers after the end of the first opium war. The first opium war came because the British Empire needed to improve their trade balance with China, but had very little to sell;

> "Had it not been for the South Asian and Southeast Asian items, the British position would have been a complete disaster. Woollens, the main British export, hardly appealed to Chinese in tropical Canton and its environs. Even with the country trade, there was a severe trade imbalance. British ships arrived in Canton with 90 percent of their stock composed of bullion, mostly silver" (Schoppa 2010, 51).

The British therefore started growing opium in India and selling it in China, disregarding the fact that the opium trade was banned by imperial edict in China. Because the superintendent of foreign trade was a representative of the Crown, Britain declared war when a Chinese official seized and destroyed 2.6 million pounds of British opium in Guangzhou in 1839 (Schoppa 2010). After a military campaign where China's military backwardness was made painfully clear, the treaty of Nanjing was signed in 1842. The Nanjing treaty was the first of many treaties where China had to compromise her sovereignty and grant concessions to various powers, who all demanded "equal treatment policy": whatever concessions were given to one foreign power should automatically be extended to the others (Fenby 2009). The period from the end of the first opium war to the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949 is in Chinese called "the hundred years of shame" [19]. The hundred years of shame is bitterly remembered in China for the encroaching of foreign powers upon China and the concessions extorted, the rampant corruption of the imperial bureaucracy making the reactionary and intrigue-ridden Manchu court unable to rule the realm and the many great rebellions against Manchu rule. For the various leaders China's leaders after the fall of the Qing dynasty, modernisation and industrialisation was a way of restoring China as a superior civilization, a cornerstone in the imperial Chinese worldview (cf. Pye 1990). To show the centrality of

[19] Bai nian chi -百年耻

industrialising and comparing to other nations in the mass mobilisation rhetoric of the CCP, Keith Schoppa provides the following excerpt reporting from the Great Leap Forward, a mass campaign focused on industrialisation through popular participation through mass mobilisation where "backyard furnaces" producing iron were central:

> The people felt elated and stimulated; millions of hearts had only one wish – to fight hard to achieve and surpass the goal of producing 300,000 tons of iron in 1958 … The people composed a song describing [the construction of large numbers of furnaces]:
>
> The Communist Party is really wonderful.
> In three days more than a thousand furnaces were built.
> The masses strength is really tremendous.
> The American imperialists will run off, tail between legs
> The Chinese people will now surpass Britain
> The East wind will always prevail over the West wind. (Schoppa 2010, 331)

The economic and military impotence of China compared to the intruding foreign powers made the CCP conclude that feudalism had to be abolished through revolution. The realization of the socialist utopia that the revolution should accomplish would be a restoration of Chinese greatness in a new socialist guise. As Robert Marks (2002) argues China historically has always been an economic superpower, with the exception of the last two hundred years. Robert Marks claims that "just two hundred years ago […] China and India accounted for two-thirds of the world's economic output" (Marks 2002, 1). Marks argues that it is more useful to see the economic growth that China (and India) has experienced the last decades as a return to a long-term historical normalcy rather than something extraordinary (Marks 2002). During the 19th century, the industrial revolution in Europe and the US increased their economic capacities while the semi-colonial encroachment on China kept China from modernizing her economy. The economic implications of the hundred years of shame were that China lost out on the industrial revolution. Although it has been politically convenient in China to place as much historical blame as possible on foreigners, Jonathan Fenby notes

> "A disproportionate role in China's troubles would subsequently be attributed to this intervention. […] The country's primary troubles stemmed from domestic sources, not the British warships that routed the imperial junks on the Pearl River. Nor was it foreigners who held back economic and material modernization: on the contrary, their concessions in Shanghai were the most advanced part of the nation, while Chinese visitors to Hong Kong returned impressed by conditions in the colony" (Fenby 2009, 10)

So what little there was of China's first modern industry, it was in general owned by foreigners who poured investments into China (Stockman 2000, 126). These investments, and

the industrial investments made by Chinese capitalists were light-years away from keeping up with the rapid industrialisation happening elsewhere, for instance in the Steel Belt in the US, Germany's Ruhrgebiet or the northwest of England. To illustrate the economic state of China when the "anti-Japanese war"[20] started in 1937, Keith Schoppa provides the following examples:

> By 1937, China with its 400 to 500 million people had less industrial production than Belgium, with 8 million people. Even with attention focused on construction of highways, railroads, and telegraphs, the little that was accomplished is rather shocking: By 1937 China had the same mileage of modern highways as Spain, one-third of the telegraph lines of France and less railroad mileage than the state of Illinois (Schoppa 2010, 213).

In light of this, it is no wonder that Mao was obsessed with industrially catching up with the west. This steely determination to industrialize is an important context for understanding early socialist China. One could for instance mention that in the first five-year plan, 63 percent of the total state investments went towards capital construction, of which agriculture including water conservation subsequently received a meagre share of 5 percent (Tang and Parish 2000, 19). Keith Schoppa writes about the over-emphasis on certain areas of the economy during the Great Leap Forward:

> Steel making was one such area. Communes built their own steel furnaces – at least 1 million dotted the Chinese landscape. Fueling them led to large-scale deforestation; any wood, including that of used coffins, was gathered to stoke the flames […]. For the cause, people contributed iron tools and implements, window frames, pots and pans – all to go into the making of pig iron. But because the manufacturing techniques were faulty, what was produced cracked easily. Useful iron implements, tools and utensils in many cases necessary for daily tasks, had been turned into something totally useless (Schoppa 2010, 331)

The consequences of this fanatic drive towards industrialisation should not be forgotten: an estimated 46 million people died in the famine caused by the Great Leap Forward, which Jonathan Fenby calls "the world's worst manmade famine" (Fenby 2009, 397). The desire to industrialize rapidly was shared by the Guomindang[21] , the ideological enemy of the Chinese Communist Party. Deborah Davis says both parties were "authoritarian Leninist parties", who "shared a dream of rapid industrialisation *led by state monopolies*" (Davis 2000,

[20] *Kangri zhangzheng* 抗日战争 –the most commonly used name for World War II in China.

[21] Guomindang (国民党) translates to "Chinese National People's Party", but is better known as The Chinese Nationalist Party. The Guomindang regime evacuated to Taiwan after losing the Chinese civil war and has ruled Taiwan since. It is in older literature often rendered "Kuomintang" following the Wade-Giles Romanization method.

252,emphasis mine). I argue that the Deng's economic reforms has been faithful to this aim, as post-Mao China has achieved rapid industrialisation, maintaining state monopolies in key sectors and strengthening state owned enterprises. Having now briefly shown how a period of history collectively remembered as a time of national humiliation was explicitly connected to China's economic capacities or rather, the lack of these capacities, I will now focus on the strategies employed by the party-state after the civil war in order to provide the economic growth needed for the restoration of China to again be acknowledged as The Central Kingdom[22]. The difference was that this time, China's restoration as a centre of civilizational superiority should come in the form of Maoist socialism[23].

The East is Red: the political vehicles of Chinese communism following 1949

Although the Great Helmsman successfully rallied the Chinese peasantry to win the civil war the Party-state had little more than land reform to offer in immediate return – giving the peasantry land that paradoxically was taken back during collectivisation. In fact, the peasantry posed a problem to the new regime when flocking to the cities in search of better conditions. Henderson and Cohen write:

> "During the decade after 1949, problems of urban development and unemployment were exacerbated by the migration of millions of peasants into the cities. Beginning in the early fifties, the government addressed this problem through a series of regulations that gradually established state control over both the urban and rural population." (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 30).

The population control policy that forced the peasantry to stay at their farms was the introduction of the *hukou* registration system. Introduced in urban areas in 1951, *hukou* was made national policy in 1955 to curb the influx of rural migrants to the cities as people were migrating to the cities faster than the industrialisation could create urban jobs. All citizens would be registered with a *hukou* registration, defining their citizenship as either urban or rural and confining the holder to a geographic place of belonging. It served its purpose well, virtually curbing internal migration until the system was relaxed in the 1980's. Not only did the CCP force farmers to stay at home: bent on rapid industrialisation the CCP also focused

[22] In Chinese, China is called 中国, 'Middle Kingdom' or 'Central Kingdom'. China as a civilizational centre was fundamental to the worldview of Imperial China and is reflected in the semantics of the name itself.
[23] The Chinese insistence on Chinese civilizational superiority meant that the alliance between the Soviet Union and The People's Republic could not last, as Moscow insisted on being the leader of the "second world", resulting in Mao's suspension of the alliance and the proclamation of the "third world", the unaligned nations, under China's leadership. (Kissinger 2011)

their welfare provision towards the urban citizenry. Deborah Davis describes the effect of this policy:

> Through rationing and migration controls, the communist leadership divided the population into a rural majority tied to their land who were responsible of raising their own food and a urban minority who had the right to buy state grain.(Davis 2000, 251)

I will treat *hukou* as the first and most basic level of welfare segregation in Maoist China. *Hukou* welfare segregation can again be divided into two subcategories: firstly, agricultural versus non-agricultural and secondly, urban versus rural. Agricultural and non-agricultural is the separation between those whom the state would feed and not, as mentioned by Davis above. Urban and rural simply categorises the place one is registered to. The general rule would be that these two subcategories came in pairs; non-agricultural urban versus agricultural rural, with very few exceptions. The most likely exceptions of people holding non-agricultural yet rural *hukou* can be found when Yan Yunxiang provides a list of people belonging to *si shi hu,* 'four types of households' which Yan, following Weber identifies as one of six status groups in Xiajia village. According to Yan this "the spouses and children of state cadres, workers, teachers, and military officers, all of whom live in the village and belong to the urban population" (Yan 2009, 4). The *si shi hu* gained their semi-cadre privileged status from having a breadwinner who had cadre status proper, and the households held a privileged position through receiving dual economic benefits. The government employee breadwinner had a guaranteed cash income, yet the household still received shares of grains and other goods at subsidised prices from the collective distribution system, all while being exempt from working for the collective. It was such a privileged position that in some rural areas they were called *dui lao shen*, which according to Yan literally translates 'the gentry of the production teams' (Yan 2009, 4). This illustrates the welfare segregation level between state food recipients and those who grew their own food well, but for a general discussion of *hukou*, it might be useful to apply Zhiqiang Liu's[24] simplification to avoid getting trapped in *hukou* bureaucratic technicalities:

> *"Hukou* can also be classified into non-agricultural and agricultural *hukou* based on a person's entitlement to state-subsidized food grain. Although agriculture *hukou* exists in urban areas and non-agricultural *hukou* exists in rural areas, these cover only a negligible share of the population in these areas. Hence, we ignore this distinction and

[24] Throughout this thesis, Chinese names will be rendered in pinyin (without tone markers) with family name put before given name. Exceptions will be made when the author him- /herself has chosen to westernize the name constellation, such as Zhiqiang Liu, or use another Romanization form than pinyin, such as Wen-hsin Yeh.

> equate urban *hukou* with non-agricultural *hukou* and rural *hukou* with agriculture *hukou"* (Liu 2005, 133)

The same simplification can be found in Jacka, Kipnis and Sargeson (2013). Understanding *hukou* and its consequences are vital to understanding life in Maoist China. Tang and Parish even calls it a caste system when arguing that

> "China is now evolving from a caste to a class system of social organisation. Chinese leaders may not have intended this, but over the years, desired or not, their policies produced a caste of privileged urbanites against a rural caste of have-nots" (Tang and Parish 2000, 17)

While the rural population was literally being held in place by the *hukou* system; the state prioritised the industrialising cities when allocating resources. The difference between urban and rural living standards "favoured city-dwellers with a ratio of at least three-to-one toward the end of the Maoist period". (Perry and Lü 1997, 3). Henderson and Cohen argues that the traumatic political campaigns in China, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, were responses to this unfairness as they were "designed to emphasize egalitarianism", which they argue is symptoms of a more general problem; "the dilemma faced by all modern socialist nations: how to maintain socialist ideals of equality while promoting modern, industrial development" (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 1). As the literature shows China suffered this dilemma too, mainly prioritising technocratic industrial development over social equality, with the exceptions of the two Maoist campaigns mentioned.

The second level of welfare segregation regarded the urban work force. Essential here is the Chinese *danwei* institutional system. *Danwei* literally means "unit", but is normally translated "work unit". Lü and Perry note that: "surprisingly, considered its everyday use, the concept of the *danwei* is not clearly defined in China" (Perry and Lü 1997, 5)[25] The working definition of the *danwei* system that Lü and Perry offer is:

> "[A] hierarchy of state-owned workplace units (schools, factories, hospitals, government agencies and the like) whose employees were guaranteed a variety of perquisites denied to peasants in the countryside: secure jobs, affordable housing, inexpensive medical care, a range of subsidies for everything from transportation to nutrition, and generous retirement pensions."(Perry and Lü 1997, 3)

[25] They continue: "According to one of the most authoritative contemporary Chinese dictionaries, *Cihai*, the word "*danwei*" has two basic meanings: First it refers to a measurement unit; second "it refers to agencies, organizations, or departments within an agency or organization". Other dictionaries offer similar definitions. In common parlance, however, the word *"danwei"* carries a much broader meaning. It refers not only to administrative units but also to other work units – including enterprises, retail shops, hospitals and schools." (Perry and Lü 1997, 5)

The second level of welfare segregation came in two forms both involving the *danwei* system: firstly there was the discrimination of temporary workers in *danwei*s noted by Solinger (1997). Secondly it was the differences in welfare provisions between different *danwei*s; not two descriptions of *danwei* perquisites are similar, because the *danwei* provision varied. As these two forms both concerns the rights of the urban work force through their *danwei*s, I treat them as one level of welfare segregation. The *danwei*s were a fundamental organisational vehicle in the Maoist political economy, and remains central in the economic and political system also after Deng Xiaoping's reforms. The macro-level impact of the *danwei* system on Chinese political and economic development especially under Mao is greater than one might think. Lü and Perry illustrate the centrality of *danwei*s in socialist China's economy when writing:

> "The actual control of assets and revenues by the *danwei* is so extensive that one might argue that the main form of property rights in China has long been "work unit ownership" rather than state ownership. According to official statistics from the Bureau of State Property Management, the assets controlled by administrative and non-productive units that should actually belong to the state amounted to 892 billion yuan by the end of 1993." (Perry and Lü 1997, 10)

To summarise: the first and most basic welfare separation based on the *hukou* system made the city-dwellers haves where the rural peasantry were have-nots. Thereafter, there was a second welfare segregation dividing the haves from the first segregation into have-more and have-less, based on whether or not one was employed in a large *danwei*. An illustrative example of the realities of welfare segregation might be Fenby's report that during the Cultural Revolution, so unsustainable methods were implemented to boost agricultural production according to political orders that "before long, peasants at funerals burned imitation urban registration forms so that the dead might get the benefit of living in cities in the afterlife" (Fenby 2009, 459-460).

The social importance of the *danwei:* influences on urban identity

Moving the discussion of the *danwei* system from a macro-economic perspective towards a more conventional anthropological approach, one should notice just how central *danwei* membership was to the daily life of the urban citizenry. The significance of the *danwei* system in its heyday also imposed itself on visiting scholars. Thøgersen and Heimer notes one could not miss the significance of the *danwei*:

> When someone asks you for the tenth time which work unit you belong to, you realize that work units are important elements of Chinese urban social structure, even if your

> research topic happens to be something completely different" (Heimer and Thøgersen 2006, 11)

According to Wen-Hsin Yeh, the distinguishing feature of a *danwei* "was a lifetime social welfare system virtually from cradle to grave, and a network of relationships encompassing work, home, neighbourhood, social existence and political membership" (Yeh 1997, 60). There seems to be some general agreements in literature about the *danwei* and its features: Lü and Perry (1997, 11) call the encapsulation of the danwei as a community and social cell for "perhaps the most distinctive feature of the danwei". Fleischer (2007, 290) calls the *danwei* a "limited spatial orbit". Francis (1996, 840) talks about the "segmented and cellular social structure […] of the Chinese Communist work unit system", while Henderson and Cohen (1984:xiii) discusses the "relative insularity" of the *danwei"*. Being a cradle-to-grave welfare provider, the *danwei* would dominate the lives of the Chinese urban citizenry both before entering and after exiting the workforce, making it important to refer to the recipients of *danwei* welfare as *danwei* members rather than staff, as one would also find school children, worker's spouses and retirees amongst the recipients of *danwei* services. (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 13). A generation of urbanites born and raised in a *danwei* believed they would work, live and die in their *danwei,* as changing *danwei* was a complicated bureaucratic process.

The *danwei*s was not just surrounding the individual metaphorically in one's economic and political life; it was also surrounding the individual quite literally. The *danwei*s was normally built as walled campuses, with the buildings facing inward. Henderson and Cohen lived in a Chinese hospital *danwei* for a year, and noticed how

> "There is a real sense of inside rather than outside the work unit, not only because there actually are walls around it but because so much of life and work is dependent on the unit. (Henderson and Cohen 1984, xiii).

The organisation of space inscribes structures of meaning on its occupants, as Bourdieu has shown in the famous example of the kabyle house (Bourdieu 1979). Within the demarcated space of the *danwei*, the individual could find nearly all one needed "from cradle to grave". There are two mechanisms in play simultaneously here. One is the physical organisation of space in a *danwei*: The walls that Henderson and Cohen mentions above are later described more closely: "Heavy wrought-iron gates hang on either side of an eight-foot wall that gives the impression of encircling the entire hospital complex" (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 10).

The other mechanism is the political organisation of space, separating the *danwei* from its city. The urban citizenry connected to a larger *danwei* rarely needed to leave the *danwei*, as all one needed could be found within. One's access to all one needed was lost outside the *danwei:* the physical walls were also a political boundary where one's welfare rights ended. A quote from Henderson and Cohen summarises this symbioses:

> "The walls and gates and the close proximity of most services create an atmosphere of people working and living together in a somewhat closed community. The profusion of shared experiences, the necessary cooperation, and the routines performed by all sharpen the sense of community"(Henderson and Cohen 1984, 13).

It is interesting to note the social centrality that the *danwei*s came to hold with a daily-life example from Perry's work: The question asked to identify a stranger in China had always been "where are you from?", but during the communist era, the answer changed from the imperial and republican era's regional origin (I'm from Anhui Province) to *danwei* affiliation (I'm from Number 17 cotton mill). (Perry 1997, 42). Bourdieu's kabylean house will if applied here connect the physical *danwei* structure, as an encapsulating, physically demarcated cell with how the *danwei* became a significant part of the individual's identity. As the *danwei* buildings towered around you on all sides when within the *danwei*, so also the *danwei* became a towering presence in the identity of Chinese urbanites. This is very illustrating if viewed in light of Jenkins' work about identity. Drawing on Barth's work on ethnicity, Jenkins (1996) argues that all social identity, rather than not just ethnic identity, consists of external and internal identification; who you say you are and who others recognise you as. Perry has shown that the *danwei* system changed the primary criteria of identification from a socio-geographical affiliation to a *danwei.* By socio-geographic affiliation I refer to that, somewhat confusing, a Chinese might even still state a place he has never been to as his "home place", as *laojia* in Chinese can both be one's actual home and one's place of origin in an extended, social sense – where his or her family stems from[26]. Saying that you are from a place you never been to makes the sense of socio-geographic affiliation a good example of Benedict Anderson's "imagined community" and Jenkins' "internal identification". In Perry's example it should be emphasized that it is the name of the *danwei* that is stated, not the *danwei*'s address or location. If the answer had been address or location, it would still be a geographical entity, like when answering by stating a place or region of belonging in earlier times. Instead, the answer became an organisational component of the Chinese political

[26] This is especially so for southern China, where the clan structure was more dominant, making single-surname villages and ancestral estates more common than in northern China (cf. Potter and Potter 1990).

economy. This demonstrates neatly how the *danwei* system imposed itself on the identity of its affiliates, and serves to connect three perspectives on the *danwei*: as a unit of production, a unit of political control and distribution and as a lived experience of Chinese urbanites. The *danwei* did not impose itself only on Chinese nationals: Henderson and Cohen describes how

> "The *danwei* began to dominate our thoughts and conversations. As we talked with other foreigners in Wuhan, we heard about their work units and were able to make direct comparisons of physical structure, function and, most important, the unit directors and administrators, to whom the Chinese and we referred as "our leaders" (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 5)".

As I will return to, the identity aspect of the *danwei* created an expectation of mutual loyalty between employee and employer, making job stability a fundamental ingredient in the contemporary benefit bundle that the State Owned Enterprises offer. Further, this thorough discussion of the workings and importance of the *danwei* system is needed for two purposes. Firstly to illustrate the welfare legacy of the *danwei* system in order to shed light how welfare in China has in recent history been corporate welfare rather than state welfare, following Perry and Lü's division between state coffers and *danwei* coffers (Lü and Perry 1997). Secondly to help build a case for arguing that the particularities of the Chinese *danwei* system has created a corporate culture legacy that must be accounted for when discussing what Dorothy Solinger calls "transitional hybridization of the firm" (Solinger 1997). There are continuities in how business is done in China that can be traced back to the political organisation of both pre- and post-reform *danwei*s.

Family life under *danwei* influence

Due to the *danwei*'s cellular structure, the economic distributive function and the political control function, the influence of *danwei* greatly exceeded the influence one normally ascribes to an employer. A *danwei* would normally penetrate nearly every aspect of daily life of its members, making the *danwei*'s stance on family matters important. Henderson and Cohen noted as late as 1984 an interconnection between *danwei* housing policy and the traditional family-orientation of China:

> "[…] the only immediately apparent segregation in our danwei was that between single and married people. In a family-oriented society such as China, unmarried people may be its most disadvantaged minority" (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 21).

According to Yeh, "figures of authority in the *danwei* became influential presences in an individual's significant personal decisions such as those concerning marriage, education, and

career moves" (Yeh 1997, 61). Perhaps the most totalitarian feature of the *danwei* was when it was charged with controlling worker's fertility:

> "The *danwei* work unit system affected all areas of life, starting with housing and welfare and eventually leading to power over the right to have children" (Fenby 2009, 372).

This makes the *danwei* remind of what Erving Goffmann called total institutions, although Henderson and Cohen argues against applying this label to Chinese *danwei* institutional form (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 8, footnote 1). As mentioned by Yeh above, the *danwei* was influential in family affairs such as marriage, but allowing much more personal freedom than infancy betrothal, a pre-revolution feature banned by the CCP. Henderson and Cohen report that the cellular nature of the *danwei* system was recognised by administrators who made a strong attempt to find both spouses' jobs or provide training for jobs in the same *danwei,* and also influenced potential spouse selection, as "it is not uncommon for single people assigned to the unit to pair off and marry" (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 20). Contrasted to when marriage was subject to the alliance-making strategies of the traditional patriarchal family in China, *danwei* marriage is an interesting point of individualisation, as the new dominant collective (*danwei)* did not regulate what the previous dominant collective (the patriarchal family) did, leaving the individual with a new-found freedom to find its own way. Interestingly Henderson and Cohen reports that:

> There seemed to be a feeling that, as one person put it, it was "not appropriate for people of unequal education to marry". This sentiment was borne out in our observations of young people with similar occupations and educational degrees pairing up, as well as the very common occurrence of husbands and wives having the same or similar occupations (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 20-21).

This is highly interesting as I encountered very strong-felt cultural notions about the importance of male superiority in a marriage, especially in terms of education and salary. An explanation might be the relative isolation of the *danwei*s, making marriage in China temporarily shift from an ideal of exogamy to praxis of endogamy where the individual sought safety in sameness, the marriage version of hiding in the herd. The epoch when the *danwei* system was at its most extensive was also a time of political turmoil, particularly the Cultural Revolution which aimed to combat new elites forming within the revolution. The focus on the appropriateness of marrying people of equal status can be seen as a safety mechanism in a time where no one, including revolutionary heroes from the highest echelons of the party like Zhu De, Bo Yibo and Deng Xiaoping, could feel safe from accusations about

being a "capitalist roader". Another possible explanation might be the state's control over education, job assignments and wages, making successful women less a threat to their husbands as the political control over, or denial of, social mobility removed the pressure on the husband to outperform his wife. When the *danwei* institution was reformed to become more like international companies, the social pressure on husbands to outperform their wives emerged. This will be discussed further in chapter 4. The point here is to examine the influence of the *danwei* on family life rather than the responses to that influence, such as intra-*danwei* endogamy.

Professionals in the *danwei*

That the term *bailing*, young urban professionals' suggested translation of young urban professionals has emerged and entered common usage the last ten years brings attention to the role of professionals in the *danwei*. It is further interesting that the corresponding term blue collar worker was not translated, Chen Xiaomei said blue collar worker is just *gongren*, worker,. While *bailing* is a new term, the distinction between the manual labour of a blue collar worker and the non-manual labour of a white collar worker is not new in China. In the rural People's Communes, peasants phrased this 'brown hands' and 'white hands', respectively (Yan 2009, 4). Yan writes that the "avoidance of manual labour in farming had long been a key privilege enjoyed by the cadres, the *si shi hu*, and some of the political activists, namely, the 'white hands'". (Yan 2009, 14). Of these six status groups, the three groups highest in the hierarchy, who escapes the manual labour of the peasants, are related to cadre status (Yan 2009, 3). Urban *danwei*s also had similar distinctions between manual labour workers on the factory floor and their elevated colleagues doing non-manual labour in offices. In the hospital *danwei* that Henderson and Cohen studied;

> "Personnel are divided into three broad occupational categories: cadres (*ganbu*), technicians (*jishuyuan*) and workers (*gongren*). These general categories cover a variety of occupations, each with each own ranking system and wage scale." (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 32)

The dual nature of the relation between state-run industry and Party-state meant that privileged positions often required party membership. The more privileged the position, the more likely that it was staffed by a party member. The correspondence between privileged position and party membership would hence mean that the distinction between blue collar workers and white collar workers were in a *danwei* with the more prominent distinction

between cadre and non-cadre, making the privileged ones cadres because they are privileged rather than actually cadres. This is confirmed by Henderson and Cohen:

> "Administrative and professional personnel in such state-run enterprises are called cadres. In the hospital these include the physicians, the nurses, and the entire range of administrators from the director to the secretaries and assistants. In the medical college, physicians, scientists, teachers, accountants, and administrative personnel are all referred to as cadres."(Henderson and Cohen 1984, 32)

The foremost privilege of the privileged would be escaping manual labour, which Yan above in a rural context calls a key privilege. As the distribution of privileges comes up, social stratification within *danwei*s *should* be discussed. It may be extrapolated from Li Qiang description from what s/he calls a two-phase marketization process that workers held interests in opposition to those of cadres and intellectuals:

> "in the first phase few from the central social groups (cadres and intellectuals) enter into the market economy […] As a result of the change, complaints from white-collared workers, such as cadres and intellectuals, have been largely reduced, but complaints from workers and peasants have rapidly increased (Li 2010, 39)

Li here puts cadres or intellectuals in opposition to manual labourers such as workers and peasants. What is more interesting is that Li sets the interests of cadres and intellectuals in opposition to workers and peasants; here Li merges what I above called the first level of welfare segregation into one, as rural peasants' does not stand alone against urbanites, whom the state accepts a responsibility of feeding. Li shows that marketization makes these groups act similar; hence it is reasonable to believe it is out of shared interest. Regarding the second level of welfare segregation, the systemic difference in welfare provision seems to be between rather than within *danwei*s as not two descriptions of *danwei* welfare provision are the same. The approach to social stratification within a *danwei* seems also to differ: Henderson and Cohen observe that "The director of the hospital, for example, lived in an apartment below a garage mechanic. Perhaps in response to earlier abuses by officials, the *danwei* administration maintained a low profile in terms of housing" (Henderson and Cohen 1984, 21). Lisa Rofel, on the other hand encountered less an egalitarian distribution of scarce resources: "Among Hangzhou residents, only high-ranking intellectuals and cadres may erect heating stoves in their homes" (Rofel 1989, 4).

Treating white-collar workers under economic collectivism as "cadres and intellectuals" somewhat solves the problem of why white-collar workers in *danwei*s were placed in any category similar to *bailing*, save for the obvious reason that *bailing* is a loan word from

English, and few of those reached Chinese before the opening-up reforms. The doctors, nurses and even assistants at the hospital *danwei* that Henderson and Cohen studied might not all have been party cadres or intellectuals, but was still considered a part of this social group in wage policies, with no indication that people conceptualised differently.

Doctors and nurses certainly wore white collars that would separate them from the workers who proverbially or not wore blue collars, yet they were not lumped into a social category called *bailing*. I argue that b*ailing* was the conceptual response to a new social stratum of educated office workers in the private sector; a new word was needed as these enterprise employees were non-cadre but also not blue collar workers, a contradiction back when all was state-owned and thereby Party-controlled. Linking the application of the term *bailing* to the growing importance of the private sector would be corresponding with Chen Xiaomei's claim that the term surfaced in popular usage approximately ten years ago. Material from Li Qiang supports this:

> "Third, changes also happened to the cadre group. Before the Reform, the cadre group was expanding, and managing staff of enterprises and professionals were counted as cadres. After the Reform, with the advancement of modern enterprise, the managing staff gradually separates from the government official's group. The group of government officials has become more and more standardized, and it only refers to officials at various levels of government departments who exert public power and do public service." (Li 2010, 41-42)

This corresponds both with what my informants said about *bailing* and the analysis above, as Li also argues for a change in the social categorisation of managing staff following the reforms; I claim that the *bailing* category came in place as a response to this. Further, Li agrees to what Chen Xiaomei told me: the category "officials" has been reworked, so managing staff in SOE's can be included as *bailing* unless they hold some public office, or hold their position through official Party nomination, such as for instance a labour union leader.

The political dimensions of a new Communist capitalism in China

One of the key features of contemporary Chinese capitalism is the interplay between market and a market-meddling authoritarian regime in a setting without a strong rule of law – until recently an unthinkable combination that according to western capitalist orthodoxy should neither be viable nor sustainable over time. Yet it persists in China, who again ignores the orthodoxies of an imported –ism with European origins. A key tool in the Chinese economic strategy is the State Owned Enterprises (SOE). James McGregor writes:

> If one examines global economic systems, however, the China Model is most fittingly described as authoritarian capitalism. The ruling Party chooses and appoints the Party members who lead the country's largest and most important businesses, which are almost all state-owned enterprises. These SOEs monopolize or dominate all significant sectors of the economy and control the entire financial system. Party leaders deploy the SOEs to build and bolster the economy – and undergird the Party's monopoly political control" (McGregor 2012:2).

Hence, the SOEs are fundamental in both the economic and political structure of contemporary China. The SOEs are based on the old *danwei* conglomerates that dominated the Chinese economic and political model before the marked reforms, but they do not occupy such a central function in the Chinese economic and political system as the pre-reform *danweis* did. One must separate between the historical *danwei* and the present term *danwei*, for the term is still used. The SOEs are *danwei*s that have survived a decade of political reform, and are groomed to become pillars in the new economy. The reform of the state owned enterprises has been a prioritized task entrusted to some of the heaviest of China's political heavyweights, namely Zhu Rongji and Wu Bangguo[27]. Zhu Rongji's famous joke about the SOE's might illustrate the state of the SOE's before Zhu started the SOE reforms: "One man works, one man watches and one makes trouble". (McGregor 2012a, 18). The finest breed of State Owned Enterprises is no longer in such a sorry state. James McGregor describes how some are being equipped to take global market shares away from the world's leading companies (McGregor 2012a). McGregor claims the best of the best SOEs, called "national champions", are the pillars of this go-see-conquer foreign markets strategy of the Party (McGregor 2012a). When discussing the SOEs it is important not to confuse the average SOE with those selected few chosen to become "national champions", as not all SOEs that survived reform this far is in such a fortunate state. There are still state enterprises that are either lagging behind or are being uncertain in how to go about things in a new economy. If John Farquharson's book *In the Belly of the Dragon* can be treated as an indigenous account even if the author is not indigenous to China, Farquharson provides an interesting ethnographic description of the inner life of an SOE and makes clear, the SOE's are still learning by doing in many respects. (Farquharson 2013). The company that that Farquharson worked for is clearly far from being one of the "national champions" companies, but both champions and runners-up SOEs are elements in the Chinese business-scape if such a term

[27] Zhu Rongji was Premier during President Jiang Zemin's second five-year term. Wu Bangguo was chairman and Party secretary in the Standing Committee in the Hu Jintao administration, making him chief legislator. Wu ranked 2nd in the official ranking of state and party leaders, only exceeded by President Hu himself, thus even premier Wen Jiaobao ranked below Wu in the power pyramid.

may be coined. Business-scape, inspired by Appadurai's (2011) finance-scapes, could be seen as the social landscape of businesses connected to a geographically demarcated place or market, which in addition to categorising by business technicalities such as sector and market share, also could classify companies according to corporate culture, if this is found to vary significantly within a business-scape. I will return to this with concrete examples below, when discussing how my informants would use "Chinese" as an adjective when discussing different companies. Not only could the company's activity (e.g. IT, construction or corporate finance), market share and profitability be mentioned, but companies could be rated on a continuum of Chinese-ness, as e.g. "not very Chinese" or "very Chinese", and this would be a reference to corporate culture.

The importance of corporate culture to an economy

Anthropology is well known with how the way business is conducted comes with a cultural side to it; business is more than the economist's impersonal calculations and the lawyer's set of legal-bureaucratic procedures. This is perhaps even more so in China, where both legal-bureaucratic framework and praxis is less absolute than in those economies that China likes to compare herself to[28]. In Chinese business, building friendships and interpersonal trust frequently takes privilege over contract-making and haggling negotiations as the focal point of securing business agreements; Farquharson describes how fourteen days of chugging 38 percent *baijiu* rice liquor from wine glasses for lunch and dinner took its toll on a German businessman in China (Farquharson 2013, 30). The reason time was spent this way was that this, being a trust-building activity, is important in Chinese business. The importance of trust in business is seen from small restaurants run as family businesses in Sichuan (Bruun 1993), to landing multimillion-dollar contracts in Beijing (Leblanc 2008). Jack Leblanc has a self-styled "business memoir" that colourfully portraits the social dimension of business, and can be treated as another indigenous account from another non-indigenous participant in Chinese business. Leblanc (2008) takes the reader through his ascent from being middle-man in rather small-scale negotiations in Chongqing in 1989 to top level business consulting based in Beijing in 2006, where the importance of interpersonal relations and trustworthiness is demonstrated clearly throughout the book as being pivotal in Chinese business. This is an entry point for discussing the importance of understanding the State Owned Enterprises, who are considered the nest of the most "Chinese" corporate culture. I argue that understanding the

[28] Not to suggest that lawyers, legal technicalities and ordinary business negotiations does not occur nor matter, it does. (c.f Leblanc?).

SOEs are vital if one wants to understand contemporary Beijing business, and with it, the paradoxical Chinese socialist capitalism. The importance of the SOEs is vital to approaching Chinese business. Aiwah Ong and Li Zhang write:

> "The major blow struck for privatization in the official sense was the dismantling of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) through acquisition by managers at low prices, along with the reorganization for efficiency which frequently involved laying off workers." (Zhang and Ong 2008)

Unfortunately this leaves the reader with the incorrect impression that the state-owned enterprises were dismantled completely and no longer exists. As James McGregor (2012a) and Richard McGregor (McGregor 2012b) argue in more recent publications, this is not the case. Ong et al. were wrong to read the obituary over the SOE's as the reports of their deaths have been greatly exaggerated, in fact the SOEs are made to be pillars in the Chinese economy as several important sectors are still under state monopoly. Some SOEs are even groomed to be able to compete and win in the global market outside China (McGregor 2012a). Although studying the workings of culture and cultural ideas within the business elite in modern capitalist economies are somewhat outside the traditional scope of social anthropology, anthropology has dealt earlier with how the social or cultural dimensions of the inner life of an industry or a sector of the economy affect society at large. Karen Ho's wrote an anthropological study of Wall Street based on her experience from working at Wall Street as an analyst, and demonstrates how culture matters in also in American big business and how this culture can and should be studied anthropologically. Ho demonstrates how cultural ideas hatched in Wall Street spread beyond the New York finance district and contributed to setting the tone for policymaking that had serious influence on American society (Ho 2009). Unfortunately there is no room to elaborate on Ho's contribution, but the implication of her findings should be mentioned. Through an increasingly globalised economy and the global influence of the US, these Wall Street ideas are bound to reach and influence the rest of the world too, in an unknown form and degree. What happens in China are increasingly having global influence too, albeit not to the same degree as events in the US may have. Since the SOEs are significant players on the Chinese business playground, the hypothesis here will be that there are social and cultural influences to the SOE business approach that through their importance in the national economy are influential in how business in China in general is done. As global business becomes increasingly intertwined, some elements of this standard operating procedure might even be transferred across international borders. The cultural and social mechanisms influencing the SOE business approach is built on the political history of

China, the corporate legacy of the *danwei*s and the political economy of China as well as traditional ideas about business in China.

CHAPTER 2: More than economy: a communist revolution of hearts and minds

The Chinese Communist Party also had its ambitions fixed on a more thorough reworking of Chinese social organisation. Aiming to create a socialist nation of dedicated socialist citizens, the CCP was unimpressed with the revolutionary character of the Chinese people. The Party considered "the average citizen of China the heir of an irretrievably useless and backward tradition - deeply prone to error unless properly led". (Schrecker 2004, 221). Mao himself even referred to the Chinese people as "poor and blank" (ibid.), or in Schoppa's translation, "blank sheets" (2010, 347) The CCP, like its Soviet 'older brother[29]', intended to recast its citizenry and create a new, ideal citizen. For the CCP to be able to establish the socialist hegemony needed to dismantle the existing hegemonic Confucian doctrines that was so influential in China. As elements and interpretations have been added to the original writings of Confucius himself, Redding's reservation regarding Confucianism as a coherent term is useful to consider: "the prevailing ideology for most of its [China's] recorded history has been a set of ideas which go under the convenient label Confucianism." (Redding 1993, 43). Hsü Dau-lin for instance attributes the very central five relations doctrine to the Confucian disciple Mencius rather than Confucius himself (Hsü 1970, 28). Confucianism should therefore be treated as a historically aggregated and historically negotiated body of orthodoxies and orthopraxis rather than as the pure and original teachings of the sage, just as all attempts of implementing Marxism has added to and interpreted the original works of Karl Marx. Perhaps not stemming from Confucius himself, the five relations of Confucianism is quintessential doctrine in the historically applied Chinese Confucianism saying that there will be harmony throughout the realm if there is harmony in the following five relations: elder brother to younger brother, father to son, husband to wife, friend to friend and ruler to subject. It is noteworthy that of these five vital relations, four was strictly hierarchical, herein the three familial relations[30]. Stockman comments that "Confucian social theory placed special emphasis on family relationships as the core of a stable and harmonious society" (Stockman 2000, 94). Since three of five Confucian relations regarded the family the inner workings of a family was a highly political matter in imperial China, to which an extraordinary rigour was

[29] The PRC was initially very eager to 'learn from the Soviet Union' (and receive Soviet material aid as well as transfer of technical expertise). The Soviet Union was then frequently referred to as Soviet Older Brother (*Su Lian Da Ge* – 苏连大哥).

[30] Friend to friend was the odd case, and was therefore "friendship was more celebrated in Chinese literature than any other social relationship" (Schoppa 2010, 9)

applied. The responsibility for maintaining the family collective was primarily performed through the duties of marriage and childbirth. For women, this resulted in the doctrine of "the three obediences", namely obedience to her father before marriage, her husband after marriage and her son as leader of the family if her husband died (Stockman 2000, 96). For men, the duty towards the family was obedience towards family elders, including the deceased through ancestor worship, and the continuation of the family name. Romantic love was not given primacy in traditional Chinese marriages:

> "The primary purpose of the marriage was to continue the family patri-line. Marriage was considered to be a family rather than an individual matter and hence was arranged by parents, sometimes when the prospective spouses were in their infancy" (Stockman 2000, 96).

Not continuing the patri-line was a serious social transgression. Due to the ideal of exogamic, patrilocal (or virilocal) marriage, girls had been "socialised from early age to accept that their fate was to leave home and marry into a family of strangers" (Stockman 2000, 97). Upon entering the new household the bride held "a very low status, which improved only when she had fulfilled her primary function of producing a male successor" (Stockman 2000, 97). For men, the status of court eunuchs indicates that no worldly success could compensate for not being able to continue the patri-line; none of the splendours a eunuch could achieve at court could counterweight his inability to reproduce. The biological function of castrating the eunuchs that were essential servants at court was that castrated men posed no threat of sullying the patri-line of the emperor and therefore could be allowed in vicinity to the emperor's harem. Jennifer Jay shows that castration held a more social function too:

> "[…] their castration was supposed to cut of family ties and thereby ensure both chastity in the harem and loyalty to the ruler. […] The very existence of eunuchs contradicted the basis of Confucian society, where the family and male descendants were of the utmost importance. The eunuchs were social outcasts due to the fact that their castration violated filial piety, which held that the greatest crimes were to leave no heir and to harm the body that was given by parents. The harshest curse a Chinese could make even today would be to wish the adversary to have no descendants (Jay 1993, 466)

If high rank at court and access to the Son of Heaven himself was rewarded with nothing but scorn and contempt, the logic should extend to (non-castrated) childless men of great worldly success, such as great artists, revered scholars or successful generals; all their achievements lingering in the shadow of their failure to produce a son. The point to be made is that the

primary duty that the collective required from the individual was a duty the individual could not deliver alone; it takes two lips to kiss.

Aiming the socialist social reorganisation project at the family

Marxist dogma argues that the holders of power will attempt to naturalize the obfuscating effects that the superstructure holds on the material base, and the traditional Chinese family system had been actively interwoven with Chinese feudalism, as the patrilineal, patriarchal and patrilocal features can be viewed as:

> "[…] the core features of an ideological discourse of the family sustained by and for the powerful elements of imperial Chinese society, sustained by and for the powerful elements of imperial Chinese society, comprising in particular the central imperial state, powerful and wealthy families in given localities and men in general." (Stockman 2000, 98)

Since peace and economic growth was the highest priority of the Party following the devastating wars, the Party started out with an ambivalent stance towards reforming the family. Ideologically the traditional family was central in Confucianism, which was central in the Chinese feudalism which the CCP was determined to eradicate, making the traditional family a symptom to a greater disease, feudalism:

> "The Communist approach to the family was in many ways radical, but it was always a part of a wider programme of social change, the underlying philosophy of which did not accord very much significance to the institution of the family as such; Marxist theory allocated it to the superstructure, dependent on changes in the material base " (Stockman 2000, 102).

On the other hand, hierarchical families with a strictly enforced inner discipline were a suitable governmental tool as patriarchs could assist in keeping the young and restless in place. Zhang and Schwartz comments that the CCP initially played on Confucian family centrality to smoothen what they term the first wave of land reform, from 1949 to 1952 (Zhang and Schwartz 1997, 194). This can be seen as a strain of the CCP ideological pragmatism that eventually would produce "socialism with a market economy". Stockman comments on the same phenomenon: since "the government was primarily concerned to develop the economy, and to this end the hierarchically structured family could at times be a useful means" (Stockman 2000, 102). The pragmatist practical approaches did not alter the fact that the CCP aimed to reform the Chinese family in the name of socialism. This reform was not to wait for the new socialist material base to create a new, socialist superstructure; the reform was to

come by law. Somewhat in contradiction to Marxist dogma, the political reform of the superstructure was seen as a step on the way to a new material base:

> "Apart from a desire to reduce the power of patriarchs, the aim of the Communist leadership was to lay the foundation for a stable and happy family life which would enable family members to devote their efforts to the construction of a new socialist society" (Stockman 2000, 103)

As the CCP set out to reform the family, there were numerous practises that the Party decided had to be addressed. Under the headline *Revolution in the family*, Keith Schoppa writes:

> "the [1950 Marriage] law allowed single women, divorcees and widows to own land in their own names; land reform thus benefited one group in Chinese society that had never been able to hold land. But the law went well beyond economic rights; it struck at the very heart of the traditional family system […] The Marriage Law abolished the traditional family system "based on arbitrary and compulsory arrangements and the superiority of man over woman." The new system was based "on equal rights for both sexes and on the protection of the lawful interests of women and children". Arranged marriages, child betrothals, polygamy, and the selling of women into marriage were forbidden. Women, as well as men, could initiate divorce proceedings. Infanticide was forbidden." (Schoppa 2010, 313).

This part of socialist doctrine received, not surprisingly, less approval from the Chinese peasantry than land reform. In fact, it was met with fervent resistance, often causing the local representatives of the state to budge on the implementation of the law as there was greater local autonomy, hence greater room for resistance, in Mao's China compared to Stalin's Soviet Union. The author Xinran noted that when travelling in the Chinese periphery, she encountered policies under implementation that Beijing ordered implemented twenty years earlier (Xinran 2010). In hindsight, the CCP during radical Maoism were less authoritarian than their Soviet counterparts. The implementation of socialist state atheism may serve as an example: Weller and Sun notes that "temple religion suffered in China throughout the twentieth century", included the Guomindang period, but total repression was only attempted under the Cultural Revolution, which Weller and Sun calls "a relatively short compared to what happened in the Soviet Union, for example. It was not enough to break social memory" (Weller and Sun 2010, 33). Concerning the resistance against the marriage law's attempt to "abolish the traditional family system", Schoppa writes:

> "[…] the law was on the books but was not always put into practice. The right to divorce created considerable confusion and disorder when hundreds of thousands of women in unhappy marriages tried to divorce. Husbands and their mothers, who stood to lose wives and daughters-in-law, were angry. The local party cadre whose job it was to execute the law was caught in the middle. […] In most cases, cadres became

> the major problem that undercut the Marriage Law; it was not strictly enforced in the countryside" (Schoppa 2010, 313-314).

The ownership that husbands and their mothers claimed over wives and daughters-in-law, not forgetting the obedience demanded from unmarried daughters, ideologically coincided with the well-being of the nation as a whole since the superiority of husbands over wives and fathers over children represent two of the five Confucian relations upon whose harmony the harmony of the realm depended. It seems safe to conclude that traditional Chinese family life was a form of social organisation that the communist party could not accept politically. Following Marxism, the feudalist family structure, being feudalist superstructure, should wither away as the feudalist material base was replaced with a socialist material base, but this clearly survived radical Maoism.

Moderate Deng and the second revolution of social life in China

The Cultural Revolution is counted as the most Maoist period of radical Maoism. It was also arguably the most authoritarian period of radical Maoism, with its purges, condemnations, self-criticisms and struggle-meetings:

> "Authoritarianism was the Maoist way […] Revolutionary violence was the means to pursue that way, and anybody considered likely to step out of line was automatically a counter-revolutionary" (Fenby 2009, 527)

After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping started the process known as kaifang gaige, 'open-up reform'. Weary of the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping advocated carefulness in the reform process captured in the quote "crossing the river by feeling the stones". The reforms therefore started to carefully dismantle those features of political Maoism whose results were deemed unsatisfactory, such as the 'iron rice bowl' danwei institution and the rural People's Communes. Amid the opening up-reform measures dismantling the class warfare authoritarianism of Mao, Deng introduced the probably most authoritarian feature of authoritarian socialism in China, the introduction of fertility control, the one child policy. As Fenby writes,

> "But, in one area of life, state interventionism was stepped up as the regime tried to impose a one-child policy. China already had a high legal minimum age for marriage – twenty for women and twenty-two for men. Permits were required to give birth. There had been sterilization drives. But the population still rose. In 1979, a one-child limit was implemented in cities – a second child was allowed in the countryside after a gap of five years" (Fenby 2009, 556)

Mao had initially fervently resisted all ideas about regulating population growth, claiming instead that there was strength in numbers that China's enemies feared (cf. Kissinger 2011, 155-156). The Deng reform era therefore brought change along two lines. One was the economic liberalisation; the other was the strengthening of state intervention in fertility control. The introduction of the one-child policy is an important context for understanding the life situation of my informants, as they were all, as far as I know, only children. This is important due to the 4-2-1 effect, where four grandparents and two parents all look to one child, putting an immense pressure on this child. The 4-2-1 effect is doubled if two one child policy children marry: there might be eight grandparents and four parents all depending on the income of the married couple, and if they have their own "little emperor", there are potentially fifteen people living on two salaries and whatever meagre pensions the twelve retirees/seniors have, if they have any. The quick-fix, easier said than done, would be simply to get sufficiently rich, which was becoming available through the market reforms. Economic liberalisation in the 1980's meant the reintroduction of private enterprise, both rural and urban, and frequently this followed pre-revolutionary patterns; Bruun found that for private businesses, people often returned to the pre-revolution household occupation, since knowledge, tools and equipment was often still available (Bruun 1993). Further, the family business re-emerged as the preferred mode of corporate organisation, but soon to lose the kin group as a recruitment base as the effect of the one-child policy set its mark on the coming generations. As family businesses re-emerged, other changes happened to the organisation of the Chinese economy, allowing new ways of attempting to solve all problems by getting rich. At a juncture between state ownership and new, private enterprise are the Township and Village Enterprises (TVE), which was neither state-owned nor a privately owned firm but a "communal organisation very far removed from having well-defined property rights", according to Weitzman and Lu (1994).As the TVEs were exclusively a rural phenomenon, they will not be discussed here even though their remarkable growth was fundamental to the Chinese economy in the 1980's; an interesting point about the TVEs are that they seemed to be based on the (non-farming) experiences of the People's Commune collectives, being run by local governments and being responsible for many social programmes (Chang and Wang 1994). For the state owned industrial enterprises, increasingly realising that productivity had to be raised there was no pre-revolutionary experience to draw upon as China's pre-revolution economy was in a very low degree industrialised, as discussed in chapter 1. Lisa Rofel suspects that she was allowed to work a regular shift during the latter half of her two-year field work in a Hangzhou partly because factory management hoped she would "impart more

knowledge of Western management techniques" (Rofel 1989, 8). The fate of the state owned enterprises in the emerging free-market capitalism in China is central to the scope of this thesis which brings us back to examining that which makes young urban professionals into professionals; their role and place in Chinese capitalism.

CHAPTER 3: Listening to informants – making a career in the new China

- «I used to work in a State Owned Enterprise, you know", Francis Wang tells me as we chip away at a delicious Sichuan hotpot; a whole flatfish in a fiery soup. We're in a fairly new, nicely decorated restaurant close to Francis' workplace. It's a dreadful November chill outside, and we agree that a spicy hotpot is just right on a day like this.

- "I didn't know that", I say. Francis does accounting for a European NGO, and that's about all I know about his professional life.

- "After I graduated from a university back home in Fujian, I did field accounting for a Beijing based road construction company that was state owned. It was a lot of travelling and long stays in temporary lodgings in the middle of nowhere. The physical and mental work environment was not good… but of course, white collar workers like me weren't the worst off", he says. "Besides, there was a lot of office politics. Giving face and those kinds of things, you know." I nod understandingly; several other Chinese young urban professionals that I have talked to have mentioned this.

- "It was a strong social pressure to gamble and do bad things like that", Francis says and takes a sip of the hot soy milk we've ordered. "I got a Beijing hukou *from it, but I never got to enjoy Beijing while working there. We travelled all the time".*

- "A Beijing hukou[31]*, that's not bad" I say. "Why did you quit?" I wonder.*

- "Many reasons. Apart from what I've already mentioned, it was boring. The tasks and assignments I got were simple. So I decided to quit, without having a new job ready for me. My parents were very worried, but I managed to calm them. I'm good at persuading" he says with a smile. "It was a hard time for me until I found a new job. That was really bad. You know, the job in the construction company was as safe as it gets. You can't get fired in a state owned enterprise, that's nearly impossible, even if you do a bad job. The internal control and supervision was very lax".

- "Was this the job you had before the one you have now?" I ask.

- "No", he says, "I got a job in an American company. I was head of accounting for their Beijing office. The China HQ was in Shanghai. I found that I really liked to work for a foreign company. Everything is standard". I'm not quite following what "standard" is supposed to mean, until I translate it back to Chinese:

[31] *Hukou* is still a very important: individuals are no longer bound to their geographical place of *hukou* assignment as during radical Maoism, but hold their welfare rights towards that place – a Beijing *hukou* gives you near-free treatment at public hospitals in Beijing.

- *"Standard… do you mean like…* biaozhun[32]*?"*

-*"Yeah,* biaozhun*. Foreign companies are* biaozhun*, I really like that. No office politics, no face games. I realized I wanted to stay with foreign companies, but I needed to improve my English. So I attended an American ESL school near Nanjing. The school was connected with an orphanage and a company. I got hired as a tour guide, driver and fixer. The boss asked me after a while what I wanted to do with my life. When I said that I wanted to get back into accounting, he put me in touch with the NGO that I'm working for now. There you've got my story", he smiles. The fish is nearly gone now; we are both trawling with our chopsticks in the soup, hoping to find another piece, agreeing that it was indeed delicious.*

- *"So what's next on your list? You've got a university degree, a Beijing hukou, a good job and English training?"*

-*"Eeh... Find a girlfriend, I guess", he says in a slightly lowered voice before quickly changing the topic. "I want to move back to Fujian at some point. Beijing is too polluted and too expensive. You know, back where I'm from, normal people can afford to buy a house".*

This vignette is a condensed excerpt of a conversation I had with a young, urban professional in Beijing in November 2012. Within this short vignette, many of the most pressing concerns for young urban professionals are being touched upon. Through Francis's story, we encounter what I will term different cultural spheres of business. Beijing is an economical melting pot comprised of State Owned Enterprises, joint ventures, privately owned Chinese enterprises and international companies. Solinger refers to *danwei* reform as a stage in a transition when she discusses the "transitional hybridization of the firm" (Solinger 1997) Solinger coined this term when predicting the future to come for the *danwei*s, therefore one should assume that this hybridization will firstly be for the SOE's who must adjust from their "traditional" way of doing business to a more internationalised business approach: from being economically inefficient cradle-to-grave welfare providers to becoming "national champions" as "Traditional" here would be referring to earlier times in general; a mix of corporate culture features of the pre-liberation[33] era, features attained during radical Maoism, features from the reform era and external contemporary influence, as China's economic reforms have been very focused on transfer of knowledge from Western investors to their Chinese partners. (cf.Leblanc 2008). The making of the *danwei* institution itself was not without traces pre-

[32] Biaozhun as a noun means 'standard, norm, criterion' according to the Hanping Dictionary. Used in context here I suggest it could be translated as "according to protocol".

[33] 'The liberation of China' is CCP parole for winning the civil war and establishing the People's Republic. Reunification with Taiwan is sometimes jokingly referred to as 'liberating Taiwan'(Leblanc 2008)

liberation era economic features that seeped in to the workings of Maoist economy, as Yeh (1997) has shown when discussing the influence of experiences from Shanghai finance on the *danwei* system.[34]. This is an important reminder as it shows a turn-over in legacy from widely different political eras; elements stemming from eras very unlike in policy, e.g. radical Maoism and the Deng reform era, may therefore play a part in understanding Chinese corporate culture.

"Transitional hybridization of the firm" is a difficult term to grapple with, as there are no way of telling whether a form is a temporary, transitional hybrid between two more permanent forms or the appearance of a brand new permanent form– and the notion of permanent form is problematic in its own right. Applying the term with this reservation, it seems that the present-day Beijing business scene is an opposition in corporate culture mainly between the SOEs and the international firms, with the private Chinese firms mostly taking the middle ground. SOE's here are not uniform, as some have ventured more towards international corporate culture than others. The need to transform in a new business environment that Solinger prescribes to the SOE's will extend to privately owned Chinese firms who take inspiration from the SOE's or subscribes in some degree to the *danwei* business legacy. Interestingly, Corinne-Barbara Francis has shown that the hybridisation of the firm should not be reduced to just shedding the *danwei* legacy. In a study tellingly titled *Reproduction of Danwei Institutional Features in the Context of China's Market Economy* (1996) Francis studies whether private high-tech firms would reproduce *danwei* welfare mechanisms. Francis choose Chinese high-tech companies in Haidian district in Beijing for a case study as she assumes these companies would not have any corporate legacy from the seventies:

> "Being newly emerged industrial sector with extensive international contacts high-tech firms may be expected to have a greater capacity for change and to be more likely to introduce managerial, institutional and cultural innovations […] Evidence of institutional continuities in this sector could thus support an argument for the likelihood of continuity in other sectors" (Francis 1996, 845)"

Corinne Francis indeed finds that high-tech companies proactively chose to or was unable to avoid implementing *danwei*-like welfare schemes. Francis identifies four factors explaining this tendency, which there is no room to elaborate on here. What should be mentioned is a highly interesting observation:

[34] Three authors spend a chapter each in Lu and Perry (eds) (1997)discussing different pre-liberation legacies that influenced the establishment of the *danwei* institution. Unfortunately, there is no room for elaborating on these legacies here.

> "In the large and more profitable firms, the level of provision [of various welfare] was often on par with, and even surpassed, that of state-owned enterprises (Francis 1996, 845)."

One of most central of the *danwei* institutional features that Francis found that the IT companies had to reproduce was free lodgings (Francis 1996, 845-847). In an interview I did with Emily Wang, an operational manager at a four-star hotel owned by Korean joint venture this same tendency was revealed. "*Of our 300 staff, we have dormitories for 150. The rest rents private apartments together. Interns have free lodgings in their contracts, but that can't be in dorms, so we have to rent private apartments for them*", Emily told me. Interns have relevant high school training and therefore rank above ordinary staff members, which gets hired on the basis of "basic English and acceptable appearance". The private apartment that the interns share is with bunk beds, twelve interns sharing a two bedroom apartment. Because of the considerable social distance between young urban professionals and staffers and interns the hotel industry I did not pursue the topic of worker welfare with Emily. Instead I focused on her experiences from hotel management and gendered labour relations; this I will return to below. The point to be made here is merely that the extensive *danwei* housing tradition[35] has left a corporate legacy that I as a field worker could still discern in 2012, more than 30 years after the reintroduction of private enterprise in China.

Beijing business according to my informants

When discussing Beijing business with my informants I found that the differences between SOE's, private Chinese companies and international companies were a common point of reference. The young urban professionals I talked to generally focused more on differences in corporate culture rather than ownership. My informants would frequently use "Chinese" as an adjective when describing companies, and would also ascribe certain traits of corporate culture to being "Chinese culture" at large. Consider for instance what Wayne Gibson, an US national, told me when I asked about his experience of working with Chinese co-workers in a phone producer: "*I don't work that much with Chinese, actually. We are six in my sale's team, there's only one Chinese plus one from Hong Kong. My boss is Chinese. He prefers to hire foreigners to deal with foreigners. This is his mentality, and it is very Chinese*". When asked if this could be generalised outside his own company, Wayne responded "*yes, I do think so. I*

[35] Francis (1996, 850)quotes Chinese sources for figures showing that in 1983, 57, 5% of all housing was owned by enterprises and other work units.

think that Chinese companies that can hire foreigners to deal with foreigners will do so[36]*. I'm talking about higher levels of business here, not in the factories. Language plays a part here, but it's not only about speaking English, because they* [Chinese managers] *are pretty clueless on how to go about things abroad. If they cannot hire a foreigner to deal with foreigners, they will try the Chinese way of handling things, like guanxi*". The art of *guanxi* is about building a network of interpersonal trust and reciprocity. *Guanxi* is frequently held out as a key to understanding China in readers on China, especially readers aimed at a western corporate audience who want a slice of the Chinese market pie; see for instance *China Uncovered* (Story 2009). Reading the chapter about *guanxi* in a "how to do business in China"-book in-flight going to China to do business negotiations ought not to suffice: Mayfair Yang demonstrates aptly the complexity of *guanxi* when writing: "In the art of *guanxi* three elements - ethics, tactics, and etiquette - intertwine with and merge into one another in the course of practice" (Yang 1994, 109). As Kleinman noted above, the ethics in *guanxi* may be in decline as the instrumental tie of *guanxi* gains prominence over the expressive tie of *guanxi*. Jack Leblanc has shared his experiences on how building interpersonal trust as a base to establish a business relationship upon can manifest itself in Chinese business: excessive *baijiu* drinking, lavish banquets, exclusive karaoke clubs and occasionally, prostitutes (Leblanc 2008). A Canadian expat working in a big Beijing design firm told me that the hard partying in business negotiations was as much about "having dirt on each other" as having fun together, which in a strange way seemingly builds trust. One can only speculate in what Francis Wang in the vignette meant when he talked about "social pressure to gamble and bad things like that" as reason for quitting the road construction company. Francis's example shows that not all young Chinese yields to conformity and join the party like Jack Leblanc did; Francis left a safe job in favour of unemployment to get away from "gambling and bad things". Other informants were more explicit than Francis. Hannah Liu gave the following career advice: "*smart juniors will kiss ass and drink with the boss. My former boss really loved this. We'd be chugging down good red wine in a western restaurant being very loud and noisy. This is a face thing. You should know how to do this, or you'll make yourself unimportant*". If this is extended to Francis Wang's experience, it seems clear that just refraining to gamble and "do bad things" is not really an option. One could say about gambling with colleagues what is said in gambling; you are either in, or out. Francis Wang threw his hand and left the SOE. Hannah Liu further commented that people work with colleagues and play with colleagues, with no

[36] Kissinger (2011) has made similar observations about Chinese diplomacy, arguing that letting foreigners deal with foreigners is a long-standing tradition.

separation between the people you work with and those one enjoy leisure with. Hannah summed it up like this: "*If you want a promotion, you better put in some extra effort socially. You don't have to be very good at what you do professionally, though…"* Wayne Gibson touched upon the same phenomenon: "*A Chinese workplace stereotype is to aim to approach level of mediocrity, then slip through the cracks and get away with it. You'll find this everywhere, but the Chinese do it to a shocking extent. The point is to be promoted to level of incompetence. Do well over time, and you will be promoted. When you get promoted, you get more complex responsibilities and at some point you can't do good anymore. Then you should settle for mediocrity and try to get away with it.*" Did Chinese nationals share the same experience from Beijing business? Annie Huang told me that "*distrust of strangers is Chinese culture*", a claim supported in literature by Redding (Redding 1993). Annie continued: "*most people adhere to zhongjian. They don't want to stand out with their opinions. Do you know zhongjian?*" I did not, so I hastily looked it up: my Hanping dictionary app translated *zhongjian* as "doctrine of the mean[37]" without any further explanation. Annie explained *zhongjian* with a proverb saying "the tallest tree will be chopped down first", and continued to elaborate: "*Ancient culture still affects modern Chinese. No one wants to be seen as an individual in the work place, they want to hide in the herd. I'm like that at my work place too towards my Chinese colleagues, but not towards my western colleagues*". Hiding in the herd should not be read as saying that ambitions and promotions are not desired. It instead promotes an idea, or ideal, of carefulness that Annie explains as a Chinese cultural trait. The conventional wisdom of keeping one's head down seems to be extended beyond the individual: Wayne Gibson commented on the market share of his employer that "my company want to be an inventive and creative company, but the Chinese mentality of risk-aversion stops them". This "better safe than sorry"-attitude can probably be extended to state policy level, as demonstrated by Deng Xiaoping's maxims about avoiding global leadership and "crossing the river by feeling the stones", meaning very slowly and carefully. Even if there is a cultural legacy for this carefulness, it can also be seen as a response to individualisation, where the increasingly highlighted individual seeks the safety of unity. As internal competition is harsh, whether the crowd is as safe place to hide should be scrutinized further.

[37] Zhang and Schwartz (1997, 195) also translates it as "doctrine of the mean", presenting it as "Confucius' philosophy of moderation"

Sharp elbows, sweet tongues: backstabbing and alliance-making in the workplace

When networking is more important for promotions than skills and standing out simultaneously is considered a risk, the combination of skills and ambitions become potentially dangerous. This makes *guanxi*, the art of alliance-making, in the workplace important knowledge, with the Chinese measure of prestige and honour ("face"), forming the backdrop here; chugging red wine with your boss is a face thing. The importance of face, herein proper acknowledgement of rank, should not be underestimated: Hannah told me of two bosses she has known that only talked to people of the same rank, unless you were of use to them. This meant that they would not extend the most basic courtesies to subordinates. "*They don't send emails; they only do phone calls because these can't be forwarded, so there's no proof. Obviously, this kind of bosses is hated by their employees, but they don't care".*

Wayne Gibson told me he had experienced the workings of alliance-making first-hand. "*I saw this in my company. A boss from Product Operations yelled at an employee from Schedule department, who was clearly in the wrong. They were both Chinese. The Schedule department guy fumed at being yelled at in public, but he was not in Prod-Op's chain of command and was buddy with the head of the business unit, so he was protected*." Hannah Liu had also witnessed network-building and alliance-making in the workplace, she told me. In Hannah's own, apt words: "*There are always women in a company willing to sleep with the bosses, Chinese and foreign bosses alike. The training manager in a BIG foreign real estate company got promoted to HR director after dating the Chief Financial Officer. She then headhunted in her former colleagues from her former company, who was a competitor. This is very Chinese*". When I asked Hannah about personal experience of alliance-making and face games, she replied: "*Sure. My previous boss is a narcissist. His entire world revolves around HIM. Scratch his back, he might scratch yours*". To have one's back scratched sometimes outranks the concern for the well-being of the company, being subordinated to personal aims. Wayne thinks his employer suffers from this: *"[company[38]] wants to internationalise and become a top-notch global company, but you see Chinese stereotypes. No company mentality, no team spirits. People are very concerned with their KPI's [key production indicators]. A lot of conflicts stem from conflicting KPI's, and unless two person's KPI's coincide, cooperation will be very hard*". When asked about meritocracy versus alliance-making, Wayne responded:

[38] Company names are removed to ensure anonymity.

"*meritocracy is present, but not very strong. One need more than fulfilling one's KPI's. Everyone has an agenda. It was rumoured that a company boss wanted an employee out so badly that he was willing to let good deals fail to shame the employee he wanted out of the company*".

It would be misleading to believe that alliance-making, conspiring co-workers and narcissist bosses are phenomenon exclusive to business in China or Beijing. Silicon Valley, Wall Street and the City of London are most certainly no kindergartens either, but it remains interesting that several informants ascribe either these phenomena themselves or the degree they appear with as something Chinese, in adjective form. I encountered an empirical case that expands the perspective on social life in Chinese business by having the phenomena reversed. I interviewed Ye Wen, a Chinese national who returned from studying in Germany to work for a German industrial design company in Beijing. She shared her frustrations about her boss, a German national "*who doesn't understand China. He once called in an employee to work overtime on his day off after working loads of overtime already. In our company, you need to work two days overtime to get a full day off, so this was a big deal. The boss called him in because he could not take a taxi alone in Beijing after living in Beijing for three years! He speaks some Chinese but he just wants someone to fetch him because he's the boss. Chinese who are not used to foreigners will just listen to the boss and do as they are told. My boss probably knows he's not well-liked*". When hearing this, a general reflection that Hannah Liu offered came to mind. Hannah told me that "*foreign companies sometimes has very strange office environments; the Chinese bosses in foreign companies are there because they really want to work for foreign companies and therefore relentlessly wants to do good, in a dog-eat-dog way, while the foreign company HQ might send their office idiot to China to get rid of him. The combination is not good*!" Farquharson also reports having observed the strategy of sending the office idiot to China to get rid of him (Farquharson 2013). Office politics was something my informants, like Francis in the vignette, ascribed to a Chinese business culture, but Ye Wen told me that her German boss plays office politics towards the HQ in Germany by making his Chinese employees submit all kinds of reports to him, so he can forward them to Germany and thereby look productive. This paper mill hampers efficiency in the Beijing office, Ye Wen said. "*We have to make excel presentations of everything!"*

Ye Wen's boss aside, it seemed generally agreed upon amongst my informants that Chinese corporate management was lagging compared to international companies. Susan Long told me she used to work for Wangkou, a very famous online company. "*Wangkou has*

grown too fast, the management is a mess". Management and corporate culture was by my informants frequently related to ownership structure; SOE's versus the private sector, and particularly the international companies. Susan said that "*international companies are more structured, they have procedures for things. Chinese companies does not, they are still maturing*". This argument is very similar to Francis Huang's remark in the vignette about Western companies being *biaozhun,* which, when used as an adjective, can be translated as standardized or according to protocol/regulation. It is also possible that some Chinese companies are considered not *biaozhun* because their extensive body of procedures are seen as random and hampering efficiency. Zhao Yumei told me of a friend who jumped ship from a well-paid job in the private sector to taking the public servants exam and moved on to working in the police, having her official salary move from 10 000 per month to 2000 per month. Tellingly, Zhao's friend made this career move because her father held high rank in the police, making it a probably well-calculated strategic move. Zhao's friend had worked with HR, so the police decided to make use of her in the database department. Microsoft Excel could have made her job very easy, hence efficient, but was for reasons unknown not allowed. Instead, things had to be done manually. Although this example is from state employment, it might be valid for some state owned enterprises too. Annie Huang said she could not stand working in an SOE because of the bureaucracy.

The problems ascribed to Chinese companies were not just lack of procedures or inefficient bureaucracy. Zhao Yümei herself had studied abroad, and aimed for foreign companies when she returned to China. As she put it: "*after living abroad you don't fit into the local bullshit leadership culture*." Asking her to expand on this, Zhao told me about a friend of hers. "*I have a friend who studied abroad, and got a job afterwards in a company connected to China Social Reform Institute. He hates it, because he studied abroad. I don' want to end up like him*". I asked what he hates about his company, and why he should hate it more because he studied abroad. "*He hates the office politics, face games and guanxi competitions*", Zhao replied. The phenomena described above concerning emphasis on alliance-making rather than skills are here clearly associated closer to Chinese companies where Chinese cultural traits such as face and *guanxi* are important. Drinking with your boss might be tactical anywhere, but the more important it was to acknowledge company hierarchy by giving face, the more one should drink when toasting with the boss. "*You have to be good at drinking in SOEs. I*

drank a lot there. One time, in Xinjiang, they made me do ganbei[39] *with baijiu*[40] *in a milk glass*", Annie Huang remembered from her time in an SOE. Young urban professionals do not necessarily accept this lifestyle as a necessary extension of their professional life. As Francis Wang's case from the vignette shows, it does not take foreign influence for young Chinese to disapprove of a more traditional Chinese business approach. Francis left the SOE not because he had studied abroad or been exposed to any international influence, but on moral grounds. It was after he left the SOE that Francis discovered that he could escape what he disapproved in the SOE corporate culture by going into international companies, and moved on to an American company and finally a European NGO. Not all Chinese employees in international companies work there because they dislike the way things are done in Chinese companies, but for those who do dislike the traditional Chinese management and business culture; seeking refuge in international companies seems to be a strategy. Zhao Yumei says this is a two-way street as foreign companies in China likes to hire Chinese who has studied or worked abroad, as she claims the companies find these employees more open-minded.

A growing distaste for *guanxi*

Through *guanxi,* making use of social connections becomes an important tool in achieving strategic life goals. Thomas Heberer found in a survey that "more than half of the surveyed Han and Nuoso entrepreneurs found social connections (Ch. *Guanxi)* to be an indispensable form of social capital" (Heberer 2007, 89). Indispensable is certainly a strong word, but as we will see, in China having *guanxi* can open doors while lacking *guanxi* can see doors closed. As a case of doors closed because of insufficient *guanxi,* Zhao Yümei told me that her father wanted her to apply for the public service entry exam, the *gongwuyuan kaoshi*. She declined for two reasons: one was that she did not want to become a public servant. The other was that she did not have sufficient *guanxi* anyway to pass the interview which is the second stage of the examination. Her father could understand the reasoning behind the latter reason, but wanted her to have a go anyway and hope for a lucky strike. Her father's motivation in urging her to take the public service exam was, interestingly, that public service would be a good way of obtaining *guanxi*, especially since Zhao's father wanted her to enrol for the Beijing public service exams. Since officials have the distribution of resources and permits for a living they are certain to be in a good position for making new, influential friends.

[39] *Ganbei* – 干杯 – literally 'empty cup', similar in usage to the English expression 'bottoms up'.
[40] *Baijiu* – 白酒 – literally 'white alcohol'. Rice liqueur with an alcohol percentage normally from 40% to 60%.

Unfortunately for Zhao's father his daughter considers building *guanxi* "a meaningless activity", as mentioned above, and claims she would not wanted to become a public servant even if their family had sufficient *guanxi* to get her past the interview.

Commenting on one's lack of *guanxi* is uncontroversial, but bragging about one's connections is a breach of *guanxi* etiquette. Hannah Liu told me with emphasis that "*you do NOT talk about your guanxi. You don't talk about bribes or grey money either, but you can show off your wealth, for instance if someone enters a restaurant and orders a casket of the most expensive red wine*[41] *without asking the price."* Since none of my informants therefore talked about their own *guanxi*, presenting a case showing how connections had opened doors for my informants requires reading between the lines. Take for instance Annie Huang's way from majoring in chemistry to financial analysis: Working as facilitator in an SOE, Annie was brought to Beijing as an assistant when her boss from the SOE relocated to Beijing to work with planning and logistics for the 2008 Olympics organising committee, a very attractive and prestigious position. Annie got the job with the Olympic committee through her boss. The friends and acquaintances made from the Olympic committee job made the base for her next job: after the Olympics Annie set up a language school teaching English to Chinese people. This was based on the experiences made and network gained from working with the preparation for the Olympics. Although Annie commented that the connections she made here was mostly good for getting government jobs that she did not want, I assume that for someone with a major in chemistry, the step from language tutorship to working in an investment fund was helped by knowing the right people, or knowing someone who did; *guanxi*. Whether Annie received the original SOE facilitator position in south China through own merits or family connections, she did not say, but she did say that both parents and three out of four grandparents had worked in the government. Like Zhao Yumei's father, Annie's parents wanted their daughter to work for the government too. Annie, who works in finance, told me that finance was tough to enter without financial education or an MBA, but having the right degree was no guarantee either: "*they normally check personal background, education, family background*", Annie said. As family background checks is no longer checking your father's class label to see if he is branded as counter-revolutionary, a family background check might very well be checking what kind of allies the company can make by hiring a candidate. With a major in chemistry, Annie had enrolled into a part-time MBA programme in addition to

[41] There is little tradition for red wine in China, so the conspicuous element of buying red wine would be that expensive red wine is imported. Hannah added with a grin that New Money in China buys expensive French wines to show off their wealth and then mixes with Sprite and ice cubes because they don't really like the taste.

working full-time, but she got the job first and enrolled later. She claimed she enrolled to avoid boredom, and to network and meet new people. "*An MBA can't get you good jobs, guanxi and who your father is can get you good jobs*", she commented. This discrepancy between meritocracy and personal favouritism is said to be changing in China today, but is still an annoyance for those who lack *guanxi.* A preference of ability and personal attributes rather than connections was said to be an emerging trend in Chinese society. "*Guanxi is becoming less important*", Susan Long commented. "*People don't care about who you are, but how you are as a person*", Susan said. Lisa Hoffmann encountered the same attitude:

> Reforms in the [work] assignment system, they [students] felt, allowed those with *real* talent and ability to have the opportunity to get ahead […] Social prestige, many claimed, had begun to align itself more *naturally* with merit and education-based criteria in recent years" (Hoffmann in China Urban XX:59, org. it).

Having good education, the young urban professionals I met frequently complained, subtly or less subtly, about how the importance of *guanxi* was to their disadvantage. Often this was phrased as a critique of the role *guanxi* plays in China. While the importance of *guanxi* in China is well studied, the indications of a tendency towards the rejection of *guanxi* are interesting. Several young urban professionals left clear impressions that they would have preferred meritocracy to play a greater role in China, rather than having to know someone that knows someone. Linda Wei told me about a young woman she had befriended at a business banquet: her father is the chairman of [SOE[42]] and the daughter is a loan employee in the Ministry of [same sector]. The fortunate daughter has her career lined up for her by daddy, who arranged the loan deal to the Ministry so the daughter can get into Beijing high circles and build *guanxi*. "*We call it kongjiang in Chinese when someone pops up from nowhere and goes straight into a good job. It implies being helped by someone*." Linda said dryly. *Kongjiang*[43] means airborne; add *-bing* (soldier) as a suffix and get the Chinese word for paratroopers. The analogy between an airdrop, especially paratroopers, and the son or daughter of someone important appearing seemingly from nowhere is obvious. In this case it is obvious how *guanxi* can open doors; before being loaned out the ministry, the fortunate daughter Linda met made it to become assistant director in a SOE in only 1,5 years, Linda told me. The flip side of having such good connections is that it rules out meritocratic

[42] The fortunate daughter was sent as a loan employee to the ministry regulating the industry of both her father's SOE and the SOE the daughter made a very rapid career ascent in (see page X). The name of the SOE and the corresponding sector regulated by the ministry are omitted as a precaution to secure the anonymity of my informant.

[43] Airdrop is *kongjiang* (空降) – Paratroopers is *kongjiangbing* (空降兵).

achievement, as people with such good connections will always be under the suspicion of nepotism when they achieve something, Linda explained. This is similar to what Lisa Hoffmann was told by an unnamed woman at a job fair:

> "If a job is available in the talent market then you have a fair chance, but most of the best jobs are not in the market. My classmates find the better jobs through their parents or friends [which I won't do] because then others will look down on me if I use guanxi and they will say I got the job because of my father. I think I can work hard and in the future I can be more successful than those others [who used connections]." (Hoffman 2001, 57, original brackets)

The young urban professionals I knew had good educations, but had generally not equally good connections. This can partly be deducted from their jobs and life styles: those who are fortunate to be blessed with both ability and connections will skip the queue past more "ordinary" office jobs like those my informants generally held. This is seen in the case of the SOE chairman's daughter who fell "airborne" out of the sky to become assistant director in another SOE in just one and a half years. It follows that I count high-level management as something else than ordinary professionals, something to be discussed further in chapter 5.

Although my informants would prefer ability to count more and connections less, ability and connections are not automatically in opposition. *Guanxi* and ability normally works in parallel, as it would take strong connections indeed to walk into a job one is completely unqualified for. If lacking ability one would need very good connections indeed to compensate. The interview stage Zhao Yumei did not have the needed *guanxi* to pass was after the public service exam. Failing the exam and still obtain a position as public servant in Beijing would require firm intervention from powerful friends indeed. For mere mortals without such supreme connections, *guanxi* is often that extra feather that shifts the scale in their favour, given that they have sufficient ability. If social capital is conceived as abstract social money, various ambitions would come with varying prices and one must assess if has sufficient social capital to afford a certain strategy. Zhao Yumei also told me about a friend of hers who worked in a partly state owned bank. Zhao's friend had the *guanxi* to get the job interview that she was hired from, but not enough *guanxi* to get promoted. Further complicating, she would not only need to build in-house *guanxi* towards the bank management to get promoted, but also bring customers on board. Bringing customers on board could be achieved through good salesmanship, but could also be solved with *guanxi* outside the bank. If Zhao's friend had rich parents, they could place their savings at her employer on the condition that the daughter was promoted. This could also be used to secure

being hired, if that was the case. If the parents are not rich enough themselves, they can assist their child in finding people whose savings can be placed in the bank to secure promotion. From this, Zhao concluded that meritocracy exists to a certain degree amongst those who made it to the inside, but making it to the inside takes *guanxi.* "*We call it qiaomenzhuan*[44]*, which means door opener, a password. You need this*", Zhao told me. A case demonstrating the parallel workings of ability and *guanxi* was unveiled when I asked head hunter Susan Long about how *guanxi* favours affected her work life. Susan told me that she weren't too into this after living in the US for over a decade, but once she was approached by family and asked to help a young man find a job. He could not speak English, so Susan could not help him, as she deals mostly with international firms. For this unfortunate young man, there was a potential interplay of ability and *guanxi*, but his abilities were insufficient. If his ability, here the command of English, had been sufficient he might just have had the right connections through Susan to land a good job.

The unfairness of guanxi

Guanxi is a long-standing Chinese social technique central to understanding China. It is probably the nearest thing to a gate-keeping concept, following Appadurai (1986), for China. It should here be noted that Xiangqun Chan has argued that *guanxi* is being over-emphasised by western scholars on China and that her suggested model, *lishang-wanglai*[45] is emically preferred over *guanxi* by Chinese. (Chang 2010) . The declining importance of *guanxi* is interesting as *guanxi* is per definition not individual. The two main facets of meaning to the word is "relation, network". *Guanxi*-as-relation has at least two parties. *Guanxi*-as-network will have many. Hence, the individual cannot simply choose to obtain *guanxi;* like marriage, it takes two to tango. If the restaurant owner has no personal relation to the Health Inspector, he might have a relation to someone who does, who can ask for "a favour" on his behalf. If the Health Inspector agrees, the middle man owes him a favour and the restaurant owner owes a favour to the middle man. If these favours are money in an envelope it borders corruption. If it is delayed reciprocity between old friends, corruption charges are hard to prove, and it is not counted as true corruption. Recall here the young man who insisted his father was an incorrupt official as he took no bribes larger than 10 000 yuan, only "gift cards and things like that". Although *guanxi* is too complex a phenomena to be reduced to simple instrumentality,

[44] 敲门砖。
[45] 礼尚往来。

it is interesting that Stornes notes that her informants quickly made an impression of how useful knowing her would be; they concluded that she was "empty *guanxi*" because she did not want to start a business neither in China nor in Norway (Stornes 2012) This revelation did not mean terminating their relation, an indication that *guanxi* cannot reduce social relations to instrumental utility calculations.

Shmuel Eisenstadt (Eisenstadt 1973) has argued that patron-client relationships working within the modern bureaucratic state can be called neo-patrimonialism. The age-old *guanxi* technique within an industrial socialist bureaucracy would qualify as an example of Eisenstadt's point. Where the bureaucrat, the supposedly faceless servant of the state is supposed to grant equal rights upon all the state's subjects, a highly relevant problem with neo-patrimonialist *guanxi*-based manipulation of polical rights is the unfairness of it: the more one have to offer, the more one can obtain; as reciprocity is central in *guanxi*, g*uanxi* have-nots have little to offer. A rural migrant in Beijing, for instance a street vendor, would have to "pull"[46] an incredible amount of *guanxi* to see a doctor when sick, assuming the vendor does not have a Beijing *hukou*, nor health insurance nor enough money to pay the going rate. The vendor's remaining hope would be to know someone who knows someone who can help obtain the desired favour. Unfortunately, it would be exceptional if the vendor knows someone that can ask such a favour of a Beijing doctor, whereas it is nothing exceptional about the rich and powerful making some phone calls so they can skip the queue at the best hospitals. Adding to the unfairness, the doctor might even abstain from asking payment from the rich and powerful as a gesture of good-will, (giving face) and as a basis for establishing a relation of delayed reciprocity. Using this example as an entry point to relating *guanxi* to the question of welfare, capital here comes in three relevant forms: *hukou* is political capital, *guanxi* is social capital and money is financial capital. For instance hospital access can be granted by knowing someone, by having a Beijing *hukou* or by simply paying for urban hospital access. The marketization of Chinese welfare services has (re)introduced financial capital as a relevant capital form where the pre-reform welfare distribution would have no room for openly paying one's way. As Nancy Chen observers, "it is increasingly possible for people from rural areas with money rather than connections to bypass the old referral system from county to province to city hospital" (Chen (ed) 2001, 178). The marketization of health in China constitutes a shift of importance from the political rights that the urban *hukou* individual held against the *danwei* during the Maoist era, towards an increased importance of

[46] *La guanxi* (拉关系): the expression for using *guanxi* to obtain benefits uses the verb *la*, which means 'to pull'.

social or financial capital. In this respect urban citizens have moved from having collective welfare rights towards an atomization of their welfare rights, a shift that should be seen as a force of individualisation. Nancy Chen writes:

> "Shifts in state health care policies during the post-Mao period, from guaranteed medical care to more complex combinations of reimbursements and self-payment have meant that individuals are ever more responsible for health care cost. There is an increasing everyday sense that well-being and the pursuit of health require more personal wealth in an era of commodified medicine." (Chen 2001, 166)

The transition from medical care guaranteed by the state towards a complex entanglement of state commitments, market mechanisms and individual responsibilities is seen as a reduction of welfare commitment by the state. The benefits one can draw from the compulsory insurance schemes all legally hired workers must pay, the *wu xian yi jin*[47] *(* lit. "five insurances, one fund") did not impress the young urban professionals. "The money people pays for the insurances is money they'll never see again", Hanna Liu commented. "*The money goes to the government, but does not give any real benefits. The benefits one can draw are weak, for instance easy-to-cure diseases treated in lower tier hospitals by trainee doctors. In China, if you don't pay extra for treatment they'll let you die.*" The *wu xian yi jin* is a compulsory insurance of minimum 7% of the monthly wage, and that money is then matched by the government, with the exception of the housing fund. Above a law-enforced minimum, the employer and the employee negotiate over how much of the insurance premium the employer will cover. Emily Guang, the hotel manager, told me that in addition to the compulsory insurance her hotel covered 45% of the premium for their employees in private insurance programme, but commented similar to Hannah Liu that the money paid in compulsory insurance "*is basically lost, of course*". The difference between hotel staff and proper *bailing* young urban professionals can be seen here: Linda Wei had 90% coverage paid by her company, highly likely in a better and more expensive insurance programme

What makes a good job: *hukou,* management, corporate welfare and job stability

I asked Chen Xiaomei about the characteristics of an ideal job. Providing a rather uncontroversial answer, she told me that the ideal job was stable and financially high-yielding. What is of more interest is that there is a generational divide between young urban professionals and their parent's generation in what to aim for when approaching the labour market. Chen Xiaomei told me job stability was of greater importance to the parent generation

[47] 五险一金

of today's young urban professionals, counting a good job as a job one could have for life, she said. The parent generation's attitude can be seen as simultaneously stemming from either the "iron rice bowl", the nickname for the absolute job stability provided by the *danwei* system before reform, or from the insecurity following the breaking of the unbreakable "iron rice bowl", or both. When I asked what was on the minds of young urban professionals, Hannah Liu told me that young urban professionals worry about two things: job security and career. While there is a historical, political and cultural legacy for desiring job stability, there are little corresponding legacy for desiring career development in the context of an industrialised economy. As the corporate hierarchy of a *danwei* simultaneously was a part of the political hierarchy, the Party maintained stern political control of who was allowed to climb the career ladder and not. The opposing concerns between job stability and career progression are hence a product of the new economy, as the pre-reform economy guaranteed the one and largely excluded the other. SOE and government jobs are those with highest job stability, but may impede career development due to the lack of personal professional development – "*four people doing half a person's job*", as Zhao Yumei phrased it. With the heightened stability and lax internal work pressure, the SOEs are considered suitable workplaces for women, as it is a belief that the ideal woman's job is stable and not too demanding. What was presented above as the ideal job is has then characteristic that is male-biased, as 'financially high-yielding' is replaced with 'not exhausting' in the description of the female ideal job, fitting nicely with a strong cultural ideal of the male breadwinner that will be discussed further below. Zhao Yumei told me about a friend who works in an SOE who "*work very hard without getting any promotions and the system really changed her. She does not really like her job. Most of her colleagues are really rich; one woman she works with even had diamond headed joints in her tooth bracers…*" As Zhao's friend could not climb the SOE career ladder, the really rich female colleagues did not earn their wealth from working at a low rung together with Zhao's friend. Rather, they work in the SOE because their husband is doing swell elsewhere and can afford to have the wife making less money in exchange for a less demanding job, since the ideal job for a woman is stable and undemanding. The peculiar fact that hard work could not earn Zhao's friend a promotion even when surrounded with colleagues who needed few ambitions of their own as they were already "really rich" indicates that Zhao's friend lacked sufficient *guanxi*, revisiting the fact that young urban professionals dislike prominence of *guanxi* over ability. In the vignette, Francis Wang connected this directly to corporate management with his observation that foreign companies are "standard" (*biaozhun)* with "no office politics, no face games" as opposed to the SOE he

left.

While the social milieu of *zhongjian* distrust, backstabbing and alliance-making in the workplace has been discussed above, there is another aspect of management that influence the opinions of young urban professionals. According to Zhao, foreign companies always follow Chinese laws, while private Chinese companies and SOEs don't. The worst exploiters are private companies with political connections, she said. It is not unknown to happen that Chinese companies simply do not pay their dues to foreign creditors, because the Chinese companies know their foreign creditor cannot win in the local Chinese courtroom. When asked about this, Susan Long commented that "*companies doing that will lose their reputation, so it is not very common"*. She still confirmed the existence of the phenomenon: "*there will always be people like that…*" Susan admitted that she treated foreign and Chinese companies differently, by always demanding pay up front from Chinese companies, while accepting pay after providing a suitable candidate that was hired from the international companies. Insurance salesman Robert Brown, a US expat with 6 years of Beijing experience was less diplomatic about it: "*I hate dealing with Chinese companies. They're myopic. They don't see customer service as an option. China doesn't do customer service. They are only concerned with making money. I don't mind dealing with individual Chinese as customers, but I don' want to deal with smaller Chinese companies that aren't used to working with foreigners. Chinese companies treat brokers like servants. Some local brokers have started giving their commission back to the customer as grey money just to get the contract*". Susan and Robert deals with Chinese companies as customers/clients, while it is more interesting to see how young urban professionals view them as potential employers, and Zhao Yumei did indeed rank companies as exploiters, with politically well-connected private Chinese companies as the least trustworthy. When asked to provide an example, Zhao referred to a friend who was sent to a remote location by her company for three months, in disregard of the informal norm that married employees should not be sent away on business for long stretches. Zhao's friend was promised a promotion to sweeten the pill, making her put in a substantial amount of extra hours. When the time came to collect the promise of promotion, it proved to be false. Whether the company sees itself above the law is a management aspect that naturally influences the young urban professionals, as the general lawfulness of the company influences their stand towards the formals rights of the employee.

Fu Tianlong shared his reflections about Chinese corporate life with me in a highly interesting conversation, touching upon the subject of corporate management. Approaching forty and

well-placed in the HQ of one of the big state-owned banks, Fu himself is somewhat older than most of my informants and perhaps too settled in life to pass as a young urban professional. Fu offered interesting perspectives as he was in charge of organising traineeships to the bank's overseas offices and thereby interacted continuously with ambitious young urban professionals eager to add international experience to their CV's. Reflecting on corporate development, especially the development of Chinese corporate management, Fu told me that "*fifteen to twenty years ago, international companies were the most attractive employers by far. They paid twice or three times as much, and the technology and management were better. This has gradually changed, and Chinese companies are now as attractive employers as international companies, if not even more attractive. The management is better, the gap in salary level is bridged, and Chinese companies offer a job stability aspect that western companies do not. Most people think foreign companies have too hard competition, and one may too easily lose one's job. The companies are very profit-minded and will cut staff if they are losing money. The SOEs can't do this*." The fact that SOEs cannot simply lay off workers if running a deficit suggests that the SOEs are still subject to political influences; the Party-state would rather have their companies lose money than having scores of laid-off urbanites spending their days contemplating how the Party-state had abandoned them despite their loyalty towards the Party-state. The SOEs holds another political function that companies without political constraints would not accept: the SOEs serve as educational institutions for Chinese business at large through the extensive SOE *peiyang* programmes. "*Many graduates begin in SOEs to get peiyang to enhance their skills, and then they jump ship after three to five years to walk straight into a top job in a smaller company. Through this, SOEs have a great influence on society. Those guys over at ICBC*[48] *are called the Huangpu*[49] *of finance because they give so much peiyang*", Fu commented. The SOEs could have curbed this by placing no-compete clauses on *peiyang*, but only do this for the most expensive *peiyang* programmes, like getting *peiyang* abroad. Such no-compete clauses can only be cancelled for hefty compensations; the SOEs might accept losing many small fishes from the tank, but not the big ones.

Since many of my Chinese informants from the private sector had been rather negative towards the SOE's, I asked Fu to expand on the attractiveness of SOE's. Fu cited a recent survey he had seen, where the most popular jobs were ranked. Public servant held first place; Fu attributed this to their stability. Second came SOE's, with the private sector ranking third.

[48] Industrial and Commercial Bank of China – the world's largest bank in terms of total assets held

[49] *Huangpu yunxiao* (黄埔军校) a famous Chinese military academy (similar to West Point in the US).

Hannah Liu had also emailed me statistics showing a part of the same tendency through an upsurge in popularity for the public service entry exam, the *gongwuyuan kaoshi*. Fu Tianlong was confident that "*The SOEs will pass public service and become the most popular. As of now, public servants can currently combine job stability with access to resources, and access to resources means a source of grey money. When corruption is staggered through reform, grey income will be reduced and being a public servant will lose some popularity. The reform process is already initiated*".

If the survey Fu Tianlong recited from memory should be trusted, it provides us with an insight into which paths that young, educated Chinese choose when deciding how to apply themselves professionally. One may safely assume that these choices are made on the basis of careful considerations, vying to maximise some desired output. This desired output should not be reduced to the highest possible monetary reward; the decision of what, how and where to earn one's daily bread is much more complex than comparing salary offers. The process of choosing jobs would only be a robotic mathematical comparison of salary if two different job offers were practically identical; if two jobs had identical tasks and responsibilities, travel distance, office size, office view, canteen lunch menu, equally nice colleagues and granted equal prestige through e.g. title given, one would expect that the one who paid a dollar more per day would be chosen. In all other cases, factors would be weighed against each other, on scales that are cultural. To use an example from Beijing: when weighing a prestigious address versus daily convenience in commuting: how many minutes extra per day is one willing to commute each way to live at a certain address? Fleischer's affluent informants cited closeness to *Guomao* (Central Business District) as a convenient reason to settle at prestigious Wangjing, although their travel time was three times that of those informants who lived in un-prestigious southern Beijing (Fleischer 2007, 299). A prestigious address versus commuting time is of course not specific to China; for instance Londoners and New Yorkers are not unknown to this particular dilemma either. The point to be made is that the process of comparing factors is universal, but the factors in play and the weighing of these vary.

The State owned enterprise temptation: stability, benefits and *peiyang*

An interesting observation I made was that only towards the end of my stay would some of those informants with whom I had discussed corporate organisation in China the most express cautious admiration for certain aspects of the State Owned Enterprises. This was probably because our relation needed to deepen in order to permit such confessions, making positive

remarks about SOE's something conflicting, following Goffmann (1959), with the front stage performance of the role as young urban professional. It would seem plausible that since the term *bailing* emerged with the reintroduction of private enterprise combined with the rapid growth and importance of private enterprise, major private corporations in 1st tier cities is considered the quintessential workplace for young urban professionals where the state owned enterprises comes with less prestigious connotations. Positioning between field worker and informant should here be considered, as it is to be expected that Chinese young urban professionals seeks to portrait themselves as modern cosmopolitans of an international metropolis. Shining in the light of new China, they must distance themselves from earlier political experiments. If the radical Maoist heritage of the *danwei,* as economically inefficient conglomerates essential in Party governmental techniques is closely associated with the SOEs, it would explain why no-one had anything nice to say about the SOEs at first.[50] In late January, I asked Zhao Yumei if she could work in an SOE. She promptly replied "*no, never*". Not a month later she told me that she used to hold prejudice against the SOEs, believing that they were all about office politics and *guanxi*, but now she was more open for SOEs, seeing that some of them are good and have good *peiyang*. I do not believe she had gained new insights about SOEs that had made her rethink her stance during this month. The explanation to Zhao's rather sudden change of mind about the SOEs comes because our relation and level of trust had deepened greatly in the time passed between these contradictory statements, making the first a part of a front stage role exertion and the second statement a more deep-felt, backstage statement based on a higher level of trust.

Fu Tianlong pointed out that 15-20 years ago, international companies would pay two to three times more than Chinese companies, but the gap is now closed. The SOE's are known for giving, perhaps in continuation of the *danwei* corporate welfare legacy, extensive perks to workers. "*SOE's pay lower cash salary, but give loads of benefits. The SOEs don't care about expenses when giving perks to workers. SOE's give near-free apartments, supermarket shopping cards*[51]*, your children can attend guanxi danwei schools and they pay holiday bonuses*", Linda Wei told me. A *guanxi danwei* is a work unit that the SOE has a formal or informal agreement with. Bear in mind that workplaces are frequently still referred to as *danwei*, but must not be confused with the pre-reform "iron rice bowl" *danwei*. Linda summarized: "*Therefore, people want to get into SOEs, but one needs connections. The*

[50] . In a similar vein it could be noted that several informants in the early days of our relation displayed a more expressed critical attitude towards the political leadership of China, only to moderate their stances later.
[51] Pre-paid debit cards that can only be used in certain stores.

ordinary workers in SOEs have salaries that are not low, and the salaries are getting higher and higher. The top leaders in SOEs are well paid, one of the top level executives in an SOE bank made 66 million a year… and it's almost impossible to get fired". Linda wanted to show me a *Southern Weekly*[52] article online about the salary levels of CEO's and presidents in SOEs, but unsurprisingly the article, which was published two days before, has been removed already by the never-resting internet censorship apparatus. From memory, Linda recites from the article that the average annual salary for CEOs and presidents in SOEs now is 850 000 yuan, so there are certainly money to be made in SOEs as well.

The characteristics of a good job are to be financially high-yielding and stable, as Chen Xiaomei defined it above. Although there are conflicting statements about the competitiveness of SOE wages, it seems clear that the difference between what the SOEs and the non-state actors offer is not vast. The SOEs are said to be extremely stable jobs. The SOEs can improve their competitiveness by offering material benefits in addition to cash salary to an extent that other corporate forms does not. Further, *hukou* is of importance to young urban professionals, where the SOEs are the safest path to a Beijing *hukou.* The negative side of the SOEs are that young urban professionals seems to hold the SOEs out as less well managed than their non-state competitors, especially when compared to international companies. The importance of paying attention to face and the need for *guanxi* are held out as typical negative traits of the SOEs. Given that these are Chinese social techniques with long traditions, one can understand why "Chinese" is sometimes used as an adjective when describing companies with variations in corporate culture. In continuation of how "Chinese" can be an adjective describing businesses, it would be fruitful to look at how social techniques such as face and *guanxi* is extended beyond intrapersonal use and into the corporate realm. Susan Long, whose professional life mostly steered clear of *guanxi* reciprocity by dealing mostly with international companies, had in fact encountered *guanxi* through a demand from international companies for it. Susan told me that two international companies had approached her to see if she could bring a Chinese official on board for them, as they needed to improve their contact network towards official China. The problem is to find one that speaks English and is willing to leave the comfortable position as official, Susan says. One of the international companies were even willing to take an official that only spoke Chinese if that could mean getting the *guanxi* needed to getting things done. Zhao Yumei, who works as a secretary in a European

[52] Nanfang Zhoumo (南方周末), by many considered the most critical newspaper in China. Linda accessed the article at the date of publication, the 27th of January 2013.The article was removed by the 29th of January when she wanted to show it to me.

company, told me that her employer has strict anti-corruption regulations and she seems proud of this: "*They don't grease people, and this is why they don't sell very much. They would do better in China if they did, but they are afraid of their reputation. It's a good company with a good culture. They don't compromise, even in China*". This shows that the international companies all must relate to the business-scape of Beijing, and must choose their approach to Chinese social techniques such as *guanxi.* It should be noted that not manoeuvring in the business market by employing the instrumental tie of *guanxi* is called having a good corporate culture by Zhao.

In discussing the vying of young urban professionals: Hannah Liu laid out their preferred options as follow: "*Ideally, young urban professionals either want to work for the government or work in private business in the big cities or migrate overseas*". The range of strategic options are here expanded by moving overseas as a new option. Leaving moving abroad as an option aside to be discussed later, is should interestingly be noted that in the opposition between career progression and job stability it is possible to both eat the cake and keep it. The road to salvation is *peiyang. Peiyang* was defined to me by Fu Tianlong as a two-dimension term: training plus in-house career mobility equals *peiyang*. In-house career mobility would here mean the promotion and advancement mechanisms within a company. Fu held it out as strength of the SOEs that they can groom an employee from the floor and all the way to top positions. Fu Tianlong would know, working with a foreign exchange training programme at one of the big banks; the opportunity to study and work abroad is very attractive *peiyang.* Zhao Yumei defined *peiyang* as "*being given time, chance, training, future promise*", and related it to a friend in the same bank as Fu worked in that was sent to Europe to work in an overseas office there, a major boost to his career. *Peiyang* in its most common form seems to be classes, either after work or paid classes during work hours. I was allowed to participate at one of these sessions by Bradley, an American expat I knew was hired as an English teacher in an IT firm. All employees were given a two-hour weekly session of English training, and I was allowed to sit in on a group session of about fifteen young urban professionals. Bradley told them I was a spy for the Norwegian government undercover as a field worker; I think (and hope) they all got the joke. Young, educated people who cannot speak English normally suffers from overtly focusing on memorizing words, meaning they might know quite a lot of English words but be unable to make a comprehensible sentence, so the programme that Bradley set up focused on oral exercise. Bradley are not a trained teacher, but was hired on the basis of being a native speaker. As he happened to have a meeting scheduled with the

company management the day I visited, I was allowed to participate in that meeting too. The meeting was concerning the development of a progress testing regime and discussing the overall approach, as the company had clear stakes in improving the English of their employees; these classes were not organised exclusively to keep employees satisfied. Giving good *peiyang*, for example in form of expensive classes, might still be worth the cost even if the company does not immediately utilize the competence gained from the *peiyang.* Susan Long told me that what training a company could provide was very important in attracting young urban professionals, while companies with inadequate internal training would face a high employee loss rate. "*Now, young Chinese professionals want to keep learning and expand their world knowledge*", Susan said.

World knowledge would frequently mean enhancing skills relevant in the labour market, including gaining work experience. That work experience may serve as *peiyang* is extrapolated from what Zhao Yumei told me about *guanxi* as *peiyang;* when I asked if *guanxi* could be *peiyang*, Zhao said *guanxi* is only *peiyang* if your boss actively grooms you into *guanxi*, meaning that if the reason you get to participate in a business meeting where you are introduced to important people is because your boss needed someone to carry his briefcase to the meeting, the *guanxi* you obtained from establishing this relation should not be counted as *peiyang.* If your boss brought you because she wanted you to establish this relation, it counts as *peiyang. Guanxi* as *peiyang* was not something my informants commented much on, but the importance of work experience came up more frequently. Extending the logic from *guanxi* as *peiyang,* it seems to be that work experience is not *peiyang* unless one is being actively groomed by the company to expand one's experience, giving chances to make experience that others would not get. If your boss let you try something because she actively wants to broaden your work experience, it is *peiyang.* If your boss makes you do the same thing because someone has to do it, you gain the same work experience but cannot count it as *peiyang* from your boss. Work experience, whether given as deliberate grooming or not, is considered quite important by young urban professionals. Linda Wei cited work experience as one reason she might consider looking for a better job, as she felt she had been put in charge of too broad a selection of tasks, making her unable to specialise her expertise and become an "expert[53]". Chen Xiaomei told me with exclamation about a friend who had tried her luck in three different industries in three years upon graduation, something Chen ruled as highly unwise, as

[53] Scare quotes applied as the informant said it in a way that made it clear that "expert" was a figure of speech rather than something she actually expected to be recognised as – it is hard to do justice to the nuances of meaning expressed in oral speech when converting it into writing.

it impeded her from amassing work experience. Zhao Yumei stated her scepticism for SOEs by telling about a friend who is an engineer, who worked for a major SOE for three years in order to obtain a Beijing *hukou*. He paid a price, Zhao said: "*After three years in an SOE, he had no work experience! It is four people doing half a person's job. In SOE's, they focus on meaningless things, like building guanxi*." SOE employee Fu Tianlong commented that "*foreigners do not understand why people would choose SOE's, but in fact the SOE's are big, are good, provide stability and also give peiyang*". The SOEs are also especially good at *peiyang* because they do it on a massive scale, Fu told me. To illustrate scale he told me that programmes like the one he runs can have annual budgets of tens of millions of yuan. "*In sum, opportunities are SOEs are many and great, and this attracts young people*", he concluded.

The many and great opportunities in SOEs are however not distributed as fairly as young urban professionals would have preferred, revisiting the tension between having connections and having ability, or *guanxi* versus meritocracy. *Peiyang* seems to come in degrees, for instance English lessons: the more qualified the teacher, the more expensive the programme becomes and the better the *peiyang* from it. Linda Wei received English classes through her employer. The programme is computer-based, with one session with tutor for each three computer sessions. The programme costs 45 000 yuan, of which the employer pays 90% of the costs. This pales when compared to the *peiyang* Linda's boss receives. The boss had managed to persuade the US headquarters to pay for a subsidized EMBA degree at Beida[54], costing 600 000 yuan for a two-year degree. "*A lot of mid-level and high-level SOE leaders do this too. The SOE's are more notorious on giving perks to workers, they don't care about the costs*", Linda said. When we touched upon this subject in a conversation a month later, Linda repeated the point in less diplomatic wording: "*high-level SOE guys who are middle aged takes EMBA degrees from Beida or Qinghua to make their CV look good. Basically they just buy the degree*". Initially sceptical to the claim that China's leading universities are selling degrees, I asked if the universities would ever fail a high-paying SOE bigwig student, upon which Linda exclaimed with shock: "*Of course not! Are you crazy*!?" Linda told me that this is called being gilded in Chinese. Linda's remarks about gilded SOE leaders getting *peiyang* worth such high sums brings the question of fairness and distributive mechanisms up. Revisiting the tension between *guanxi* and meritocracy, Linda Wei commented that "*unless you graduate from Beida or Qinghua, you need good connections to*

[54] Beida is an abbreviation for Beijing Daxue, known as Peking University in English. Qinghua University and Peking University (Beida) are the two most prestigious universities in China, followed by Shanghai's Fudan University. Both the Hu administration and the Xi administration are dominated by Qinghua graduates.

get good SOE peiyang. Have you heard the proverb: "the son of a mouse knows how to dig a hole[55]*"? You need a strong family background to get good peiyang in an SOE*". The returning importance of family serves as a suitable entry point to discussing how the young urban professionals view their chances as individuals in new China.

Social rights in the era of the market economy

When the state allocated jobs to the urban citizenry, the state also guaranteed their welfare. Terminating the first and relaxing the second of these responsibilities, the state transferred responsibility to the citizenry, allowing greater freedom both to fail and succeed. During radical Maoism, there was not much point in comparing what factors different *danwei*s offered, as jobs were allocated from the state, transfers were rare, organising collective negotiations meant taking the risk of challenging the Party's political hegemony and individual negotiations not really an option as the individual had nothing to offer that the authoritarian party-state could not demand anyway. The reform era brought an end to this, and the lay-offs that followed in the *danwei* reform caused great dissatisfaction among the urban citizenry. The urban citizenry who post-reform lost both state employment and state guaranteed welfare therefore had to enter the emerging labour market with the withdrawal of state welfare guarantees in mind, and this still applies to young urban professionals. Linda Wei aptly put it like this: "*Poor people cannot afford to live long. No wonder everyone wants to get rich*". As discussed above, the state-market hybrid insurance solutions that were to replace the state guaranteed welfare does not impress the young urban professionals. One would assume the obvious solution would be to aim to make as much money as possible, but recent corporate development renders other viable strategic options. Francis Wang got himself a Beijing *hukou* from working for the road construction company, which in China is a highly desired non-monetary reward as it grants political rights to welfare in Beijing. Linda Wei told me she considers taking a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree, as there is an option to get Beijing *hukou* for recent graduates without having to work at an SOE. For a fresh graduate, you need a recommendation from a potential employer and one from the university you graduated from. Linda's employer could give her a recommendation, but too much time has passed since she graduated, so she would need to re-enter university to get a Beijing *hukou*. A Beijing *hukou* would be well worth two more years at school, it seems. In fact, *hukou* seems to be a bureaucratic entitlement highly influential on the choices of young Chinese. Annie Huang told me how Beijing is strangely competitive being a city full of

[55] 老鼠的儿子会打洞

ambitious people born elsewhere who came to Beijing adamant on doing well in the big city. Annie commented that *bendiren*[56] are less ambitious than *waidiren*[57], because they already have home in Beijing and Beijing *hukou*. Chen Xiaomei, who is a Beijing native, a *lao Beijingren*[58], said something in the same vein when discussing the priorities of young people: "*waidiren are concerned with hukou, which means you normally need to work for the government or in an SOE. Bendiren aren't concerned with this, and choose professions more out of interests or hobbies*". Here one can see the importance of *hukou* at work: for those without, the strategic choice of going all in for a Beijing *hukou* will very likely mean government or SOE employment. For those lucky few born to a Beijing *hukou*, not having this worry is said to influence not just employer, but choice of profession, which certainly is one of the major strategic decisions in life. To continue with Francis Wang as an example: Francis studied accounting, then did accounting for an SOE and got a Beijing *hukou*, upon which he quit in order to work his way towards working for an international NGO. The fact that he left the SOE upon obtaining one of its most desired benefits is notable, but the point to be made here concerns the importance of *hukou* in the making of strategic life choices. If Francis had tried to build a career on say, painting or music instead of a business-friendly profession like accounting, getting a *hukou* through the SOE/government job channel would have been nearly impossible. It is not known if Francis ever dreamt about becoming a painter or a musician, but it seems very plausible when Chen Xiaomei claims that people born to a Beijing *hukou* strategize differently, as they start the race having won one of the treasured prizes already. Annie Huang told me she did in fact dream about becoming a writer, singer, athlete or actress when she was a child. Instead, she studied chemistry and ended up in finance. Assuming Annie chose not to pursue her artistic childhood dream fearing that it would pay off financially in form of money or politically in form of *hukou*, these concerns acts as a constraint to the individual's range of options that should be expected to have potential political consequences.

The political agenda of any group in China, if not expressed as spontaneously improvised collective action such as a local strike, must be approached empirically by aggregating individual political sentiments as the one-party system disallows alternative political organisation. Certain similarities in political sentiments can indeed be recognised among

[56]本地人 – bendiren: lit. "this-place-person" – someone who originates from where the speaker is at present. In this context, Zhao Yümei is referring to people born and registered as citizens in bigger cities, as these families are likely to own a home that they purchased cheaply during the early waves of home privatisation.
[57]外地人 - opposite of bendiren. Lit «out-place-person"
[58] 老北京人 – lit. «Old Beijing person»; someone born and raised in Beijing.

young urban professionals in Beijing. Deng Xiaoping famously said that it is glorious to get rich, but young urban professionals showed dissatisfaction with how marketization has overtly glorified getting rich. Linda Wei told me how a hospital tried to over-treat a foreign guest of hers that fell ill, in order to be able to over-charge. Scaring the visitor with a possible blood clog on an MRI, the hospital wanted to convey that this was a complicated case that needed a special task force, of course a pricier solution. However, when a nurse surprisingly hinted to Linda that it was a scam, Linda took the foreign guest to another hospital where it was established that the blood clog was just a shadow on the MRI. The day Linda told me this she had taken a blood test at a hospital herself, and was dissatisfied that the hospital would only give you a cotton swab to stop the bleeding; if you wanted a plaster but did not bring one yourself you had to do without. "*Chinese hospitals just have no service-mindedness, no concerns for people's needs*", Linda sighted. Zhao Yumei had also experienced the same, as a hospital in Guangzhou tried to put her on a full round of antibiotics to treat a common cold. "*Some doctors make BIG money from grey income", she said with emphasis. "China is a… how to say… liangji fenhua shehui, what's that in English…*" [My phone dictionary translated it as "polarized society".] "*Yes, a polarized society, and there is a massive gap between the two poles. It's deeply in the system, deeply cultural*". Corruption is the quintessential form of getting rich that the young urban professionals despise, noting with content that the Xi Jinping administration enforced a crackdown on corruption upon assuming power in January 2013. "*They are taking down one big official per week. The government is really trying to fix their face*", Zhao Yumei observed with approval. Hannah Liu, who above says that Chinese public hospitals will let people die if they cannot pay extra, said that "*schooling is the same as the health sector. If you want anything better than poor quality public services, you need to pay gifts or bribes if you want to call it that to the teachers, plus an extra tuition fee to the school*." Zhao Yumei told me that university teachers are too concerned with money, taking money from students, parents and companies. Grey income is, as mentioned above, harder to deal with in terms of corruption and the word used for money in envelopes trading hands here is "gift" rather than "bribe". Hannah Liu once mentioned how she had seen married friends in Guangzhou spending weekend after weekend running from school to school presenting cash envelopes to teachers as "gifts", hoping to get their child accepted to a decent school. This goes all the way through Chinese education: as mentioned above, hotel manager Emily Wang said the hotel had to give "gifts" to teachers to attract graduates as interns. It even into academic research: "*The University teachers take on research projects and use their students as cheap labour, while afterwards taking all the credit themselves*", Zhao said, adding that the

students even have to refer to their teacher as "boss", indicative of the marketization of education. "*Things got so bad that the government had to issue a memo saying that the main occupation of teachers should be teaching*", Zhao said with little attempt to hide her contempt. "*I can't bear the Chinese education system. I won't have children unless I can afford to put them through good education*", Zhao concluded. Marketization of education was held out as one of the problems with the Chinese education system, as Zhao Yumei tried to explain it by referring to a famous internet novel about the shopping list a first grader took home the first day of school, specifying everything the parents had to buy. Marketization was not the only concern; the way the Chinese educational system inscribes itself on its subjects was also problematized. "*Because of the education system, people don't think independently*", Zhao Yumei said. Linda Wei told me that "*Chinese youngsters lack life goals. The rich kids will be provided for. For the rest, it's more about pressure. The gaokao exam system kills all dreams and aspirations. Can I choose away gaokao to learn C+*[59]*?*", she asked ironically. "*Most people cannot afford a dream*", Linda concluded. Zhao Yumei once said something similar when I asked the very open-ended question about her dream for her life: "*My generation does not have a dream, or they have forgotten it, buried it. There is no time to pursue a dream*". I also asked Linda Wei about her dream, or rather, I asked for a Chinese dream that could be compared to the American dream about entrepreneurship. Linda answered: "*for me, that dream is to go to the US, for the sake of my child. In the US, there is clean air, you don't have to bribe your child into kindergartens, and you don't need to cultivate guanxi. There are equal opportunities and basic human rights. Smart young people want to leave. There is a traditional saying that goes "those who are lazy when young will be sorry when old ", but there has come a slang version that goes "those who are lazy when young will grow old and die on the mainland ". Chinese people are tolerant towards the system; it is kind of in the blood. Weibo looks like a civil war is imminent, but the complainers are like me. They don't worry about their next meal. The real people have enough with struggling. They don't have internet or Weibo. People like me want changes, but no war. We could lose what we have. But since there is no change in sight, one wants to leave China instead, at least then one can change something for one's own family*". The fact that Linda Wei works for a US company and have travelled to the US on business several times might explain her eagerness to move to the US. I asked insurance broker Robert Brown if the Chinese staff at his sales office ever talked about migrating. "*One or two talked about studying abroad, then returning. For most*

[59] Programming code used in IT.

Chinese, China is their home, they don't want to leave. The burgeoning middle class talk about leaving, they are disaffected since they are well educated and have VPN s, etcetera. The girls in our office have certain aspirations, but migrating is not one of them. Could be because my company does not have an overseas branch they can transfer to", he said. Having an overseas branch might serve to attract disaffected young urban professionals: Zhao Yumei made the connection explicit: "*I love my country, but I feel my future is not here. That's why I chose to work for an international company*", she told me. "*The girls in the office want to marry, settle down in a nice home, have the child and be comfortable*", Robert continued. "*It's the same aspirations as back home. They are just more obsessed with them*".

The Beijing disappointment

According to the combined reading of Schein and Fleischer presented above, Beijing is the most urban of urban sites in China, therefore the most developed and most modern site in China. If modernity and development has an address in China, it is Beijing. As Fleischer points out, it takes money to consume this modernity if one wants to do real shopping instead of window shopping, but young urban professionals make decent money. Then it is to be expected that young urban professionals, especially those who do not originally hail from Beijing, to praise the marvel of Beijing. They do not. The merits of Beijing are not denied, but rather questioned. This particularly refers to pollution and traffic, as China is increasingly fathoming that industrialisation and economic growth can have negative consequences. Annie Huang commented that "*Beijing is over-developed. See the traffic situation?* I had the privilege of staying in Beijing when Beijing broke all pollution records, scoring over a 1000 at a pollution scale that has 500 as its maximum[60]. Linda Wei chose to spend 4000 yuan on an indoor air purifier, the Chinese pirated version. The Swiss original version costs over 10 000 yuan. Linda related her spending patterns to the negative impacts of Beijing's over-development as she recently had spent nearly all her income on the air cleaner, organic vegetables, and what she called "*the so-called best breathing masks*", expressing a concern that their quality was insufficient. Trying to laugh in the face of danger during what was later referred to as a smog-storm a married informant quipped that "*there must be a huge market for breathing masks. Think about all the worried mothers like me".* When I asked Annie Huang if she spent extra on buying organic food, she said: "*I doubt China has ecological vegetables at all. The soil itself is un-ecological, over-treated. When I travelled to Europe, I*

[60] EXPLAIN

noticed that the food quality was higher and the raw materials tastier." Linda reflected on the price of development: "*After thirty years of development, we are now paying extra to get what we had back then, like clean, farmers food*". The internationalisation that has provided Beijing with Ferrari, exquisite international restaurants and world-class coffee breweries with the world's most expensive cappuccinos[61] is acknowledged when young urban professionals talk about Beijing, but even this was contested as something not exclusively positive: "*Beijing has all the luxury brands, but people in Beijing are more shrewd, because they are educated. They are more distrustful towards marketing. The fund I work in never invests in Beijing.",* Annie said. What is more, the internationalisation was described as in opposition to the authentic, genuinely Chinese: "*People in Beijing and Shanghai are more international than in the rest of China. You will find the real China in the villages",* Annie Huang told me, implying that village China is more real than Beijing and Shanghai. There are cultural differences between the real China in the villages and the international China in Beijing: "*I got a culture shock moving to Beijing. People are warmer in a village like I am from."* Annie Huang said. Annie Huang comes from Dashan[62], a 3rd tier city in southern China that has one million citizens, yet Annie keeps referring to it interchangeably as a village or a town. There are social differences that go in parallel to the economic differences. *"Where I'm from, people are the same; you don't have such difference between rich and poor. Everybody is equal.* Annie is quoted above saying that there are less trust in 1st tier cities as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou as most inhabitants do not plan to grow old there, but to make as much as they can before moving home, often to parents who expect their return. None of my informants mentioned moving back to nurse old and frail parents, but consider the following statements about where they wanted their future to be:

"*I want to live in some middle ground between Beijing and Dashan. Dashan is for old people, it's too slow. I could live there if I was fifty"* – Annie Huang.

"I want to move back to Fujian at some point. Beijing is too polluted and too expensive. You know, back where I'm from, normal people can afford to buy a house" – Francis Wang.

"I want to leave Beijing in a long-term perspective. I would like to end up in a small, picturesque beautiful village, but I'm very flexible on the process getting there. – Zhao Yumei.

"*My dream is to move to the United States, for the sake of my* [future] *child*" – Linda Wei.

As these statements and the discussion above shows, young urban professionals do not accept

[61] An expat friend wanted to bring me to a very exclusive coffee brewery where the most expensive coffee was 400 yuan per cup. Whatever you desire to consume Beijing can provide for the right price I was told, including numerous endangered species.

[62] A fictitious name in order to ensure anonymity.

that just being in Beijing provides great meaning to their lives. Beijing might be a sparkling dream for young people who live in villages, and village is used broadly, as Dashan city with its one million inhabitants was called a village by Annie Huang. For young urban professionals, the sparkling dream of Beijing provides many joys as discussed regarding cosmopolitanism; the young urban professionals do enjoy their type of places. Still, the hefty real estate market, the pollution and the combustion and traffic is held out as negative, and those who points to these negative aspects gladly admit that they do not intend to grow old in Beijing.

CHAPTER 4: Marriage, sex and gender – a particular balancing act

As young people in China worry about how to secure their future, securing the future of future generations becomes a concern that receives enormous attention for those who have reached that stage of life where they think about children. As mentioned above, two female informants independently told me that they did not want to raise a child in China due to the frantic pressure in the education system. The pressure that Chinese youngsters are put under are described closer by Bøe (IN PRESS, 48), who followed an informant taking her four-year old son to Chinese chess[63] lessons in order to improve cognitive abilities and provide extra-curricular activities for his CV, a peculiar concern for a four-year old. One of my informants, himself father to a son in kindergarten age, told me that "education is an expression of love between parent and child". Education is important in aiding the future of the next generation, where good education is an extra ticket in the great lottery of life. Establishing "a strong family background", or in plain text obtaining *guanxi* social capital, is another way of improving both one's own prospects and also the prospect of coming generations; Zhao Yumei's father wanted her to become a public servant to increase family's total *guanxi* for the benefit of the family, herein including an eventual grandchild. In terms of discussing individualisation, this serves as an interesting contemporary case of the family collective represented by the patriarch demanding the sacrifice of the individual for the greater good; a career as public servant that the individual did not want, for the family collective to benefit through increased social capital.

The father urging the daughter to consider the benefit of the family as a whole is a product of the one-child policy, as daughters was traditionally considered lost to the family when they married, as marriages was ideally exogamic and patrilocal. The occurrence of single-surname villages especially in southern China indicates that the ideal of patrilocality held greater importance than exogamy. Yan Yunxiang has argued that in the traditional Chinese family the family ties ascribed primacy was the affinal ties rather than the conjugal ties; the father-son relation was seen as superior to the husband-wife relation (Yan 2003). Yan argues that policies of radical Maoism were able to alter this, making the conjugal relation the dominant relation in Chinese families (Yan 2003). Interestingly Norman Stockman writes that this was an explicit goal for the Communist Party family policy discussed in chapter two:

[63] Bøe does not write Chess (*Weiqi* – 围棋), but I had the privilege of being invited to accompany Bøe to visit this family on a few occasions. I considered myself a decent *weiqi* player until playing the four-year old seemingly without making any effort annihilated me completely.

> "The power of the state was to be used to shift the basis of family relationships away from the hierarchies of generation, age and sex to a more egalitarian model. The conjugal family of husband, wife and children was to be extracted from its embeddedness in patrilineal and patriarchal structures, and made the basis for a new form of harmonious family life: the husband-wife relationship was to replace the father-son relationship as the core dyad of the kinship system" (Stockman 2000, 103)

The question that arises is how the importance of marriage, the one socially acclaimed conjugal unit in China, plays out in young urban professionals' conceptualisations of desirables, options and strategic decision-making in regards to family. During my first designated interview with Hannah Liu, I asked a question as open as "tell me what it's like for young, educated people to participate in the Chinese economy". Within very few minutes, we were talking about marriage in China. I first thought that we had just derailed from the original topic, but when this happened again the same week with another informant, it became clear that this was not derailing, but following an empirical connection between concepts, where the is a strong interrelation between the concept of economic life and the concept of marriage. When I later mentioned this correlation to Zhao Yumei, she nodded and said, tellingly: "when I hang out with young professionals, marriage always comes up".

Ideal women, left-over women and the economy of marriage

One of my most talkative informants was Hannah Liu, a *huayi*, meaning overseas Chinese, from Singapore. As S. Gordon Redding discusses, it is ambivalent if the *huayi* should be called Chinese overseas or overseas Chinese (Redding 1993, 2). I discussed this with Hannah, who readily agreed with Redding that you can take the Chinese out of China, but not China out of the Chinese. I initially considered her primarily an expat, but came to realise that Hannah can be expat to other expats and Chinese to other Chinese as she pleases. Her diaspora family maintained a more conservative Chinese culture than most Chinese in China, she told me. Hannah is in her mid-thirties and has lived in China for 7 years, 5 of them in Guangzhou. I should note that she is single, because this is a considered a prominent feature of Chinese social identity for women of Hannah's age. Hannah is a corporate lawyer and became one of my key informants, providing many interesting insights from the higher echelons of Chinese business. During one of our first interviews, we were talking about social life in high business and I asked her to make a ranked list from the top of her head of what high end men talked about. She provided the following answer straight away: "*The favourite topic is the Chinese stock market. Second comes real estate, third comes jobs. If they're single, you can add what kind of woman they want to find below that*". Expanding on the latter, she

told me about a friend who based his ideal spouse from a famous Chinese woman from the sixties, although Hannah couldn't quite recall the real woman's name or how she'd made it to become famous in China. The traits that Hannah's friend was looking for based on this mysterious celebrity were stated to be: "*She should be sexy, coveted by men, good looking. She should have overseas education; I think the celebrity woman from the sixties was an architect. Thirdly, she should make her own money, but still be dependent on her husband and finally, she should be smart and talented*".

Hannah went on to tell me that in China, marriage is the best option for poor women; most of what is called "leftover-women"[64] are leftovers because they are highly educated and don't want to marry down, she said, herself using the word "left-over women". Being older than twenty-five and not married, Hannah herself what in Chinese is called "left-over woman". For successful and highly educated women like Hannah, the number of potential partners is narrowed greatly unless they are willing to marry down, but marrying down is not necessarily an option as Hannah's listing of the ideal female spouse's attributes shows that the ideal woman is capable and earns her own money, but should not exceed her husband in either of these. Cruel and insulting, the fairly new term "left-over woman" communicates clearly a social expectation for women to be married before a certain age; if not married by then you are a "left-over". It also implies that the failure to do so will be taken as a sign that something is wrong with you; you are among the undesirables, who failed to get picked. If contrasted to the traditional form of marriage in China, where marriage was brokered between lineages, the scornful label "leftover-woman" is a privatisation of blame for not getting married, as responsibility is moved from a male family head to the potential bride herself. For men, the responsibility for getting married is also moved from lineage to the individual, but Yan's observed shift in primary family tie represents a somewhat different change for men. Where being filial for the individual is largely a choice to make of whether or not to submit to codified behaviour towards the group, getting married takes the explicit approval of another party – save for some notable exceptions that will be discussed below. This construction of a socially good self is made harder as filialness is dethroned by conjugality, which requires the approval of a partner which the individual, not the family, is responsible for securing. Where marriage traditionally was brokered between two family heads, it is now primarily the individual who is being rejected if courtship fails rather than the family if traditional marriage negotiations should fail. It should here be mentioned, as discussed above, that not continuing

[64] 剩女

the family line was in itself seen as the ultimate un-filialness; continuing the family line was a quintessential ingredient in the primacy of the filial father-son relation. The change, then, is as follows: for women, the blame for failing to become married is being relocated to the individual. For men, marriage has moved from being a mean to be filial to being more of an end in itself, while also here the responsibility of securing a partner has become individualised. For both genders, marriage therefore plays an altered and seemingly more important role in the construction of the successful self. Also, as lineages and extended families are being replaced as the domestic unit, the responsibility for seeing the individual married is moved from lineage or extended family level and closer to an individual level. This transition between traditional family collectivism and modern individualism is in a state of flux: Zhao Yumei told me of a university classmate, whose parents-in-law to-be demanded a specific sum of money to allow her to marry into the family, resembling the traditional bride wealth, causing a breakup instead. As bride wealth is still practised in urban China, the conflict arose from the attempt to fix the amount as well as the in-laws demanding control over the bride wealth, which is normally given to the bride.

The interrelation between prestige, provision and marriage presents strong-felt cultural ideals. Hannah tells me that male acquaintance of her suffered from impotence because his wife made more money than he did. Although this couple is Chinese, they did not even live in China, but in New Zealand, where a wife earning more than her husband is not such an embarrassment for the husband as in China. Here one might think of Bourdieu's habitus, where social norms are embodied, manifesting themselves as bodily responses. On another occasion, a Chinese couple I know confirmed this phenomenon, as they had heard about the same thing happening on the mainland. "*It happens*", they said, "*but it is not common*". They did make it clear that they considered this a rather extreme manifestation of what is a common male concern; to make more money than the wife.

This example can illustrate a broader phenomenon. As Hannah Liu put it; "*Chinese men find it difficult to be with more successful women*". It is not necessarily, or only, the financial success of women which men find challenging: a Chinese man Hannah dated had refused to meet Hannah's foreign friends, as he felt his command of English, which Hannah says is a prestige language in China, was insufficient. "*I was surprised by that. He did not mind me making more money than him, he was modern like that. His ex-wife was also very capable*". What Hannah considered modern can be contrasted to what she considered

traditional. "*The traditional belief is that men should marry down, women should marry up. This makes the man the undisputed head of the household, the undisputed breadwinner*". A lot of girls from humble stations study and work very hard so they can climb the social ladder before marriage, and then hopefully marry up as a second leap of social mobility. Hannah referred to an article online she said she'd email me: "How to marry a rich man". Hannah says there are two life span options for young, rural women to choose between: marry a farmer or get education, get a good job and marry a rich man. Education and a good job is a dual-egged sword: if your education and job is too good, you risk becoming a leftover-woman. A popular joke has emerged in China that there are three kinds of humans: men, women and women with a Ph.D., as women who have conquered the highest degree in education are seen as freaks, which certainly are un-marriageable. There is a self-imposed glass ceiling between bachelor and master degrees for women, as taking a master degree would mean one would have to gamble for a man with a Ph.D., while settling with a bachelor degree makes a man with a master degree the undisputed leader of the household, and men with master degrees come in ampler supply than doctors.

Marriage, mistresses and prestige

Since failing to marry signals a deficiency in the individual, being able to marry demonstrates an individual's capacity, which makes marriage a vehicle of prestige and success. During a discussing on how marriage is a question of prestige in China, Hannah Liu asked me: "*do you know what match-makers ask about in China? They ask about income, assets, appearance, age and height*". This is a telling case as match-making, be it through an intermediary or through contact ads, is concerned with the construction of an idealized persona along certain criteria. In constructing this idealized persona, the individual will be transformed to a description based on culture-specific conventions. Chinese match-makers do not ask for hobbies, personal interests or any description of personality such as "kind, sporty", etc. I am under the impression that it would be a grave breach of genre in western European contact ads to specify income or assets save for sometimes including a fairly cryptic reference to "good personal economy". The five Chinese match-making criteria can be grouped as either wealth or visible appearance. Applying supply-demand thinking at its most basic level, one may safely assume there is a reason for Chinese match-makers to ask what they ask about and omit what they do not ask about. As wealth and appearance are the criteria for comparison to an idealized persona, this ideal match would be someone rich and good-looking. Although the poor and ugly are never popular items in blind-dating or match-making, it seems that the

match-making is more explicitly focused on this screening in China than in Western Europe. From this explicit focus on wealth and appearance, one may propose that match-making and, through that, marriage in China is interrelated to ideas about economy, economic safety and provision on one side and social acceptance and prestige on the other side.

Prestige, wealth and appearance had been touched upon earlier in this conversation, when Hannah told how common she thought it was to have affairs. Hannah related this to a former boss of hers who had a very obvious affair with a secretary. Although divorce rates are soaring in China, Hannah emphasised that "*Chinese social climbers will never divorce their wives*". They will instead have mistresses. In Hannah's words; "*it's like the feudal system where the beauty of your concubines showed your social prestige, only now it's the beauty of the mistress*". Hannah listed expensive cigarettes, *baijiu* and, more westernized, watches as prestige objects, and then the mistress. I had read about mistresses in Leblanc's book "Business Republic of China", and asked if the Chinese word was *ernai*[65]. Leblanc tells of meeting a business-official for dinner that brought a young woman clearly for her beauty to shine upon him, and she is referred to as an *ernai*. This was not the case, what Hannah was here referring to she labelled *xiaosan.* She explained that the difference between *ernai* and *xiaosan* is that a *xiaosan* might break a marriage.

A similar observation was made by another informant, Annie Huang. Annie is in her mid-twenties, comes from southern China and works in finance, in an investment fund. She too noted that having a *xiaosan* was very common. Apparently, a *xiaosan* is not necessarily an extramarital affair, as a man may have a *xiaosan* before marriage. It seems still clear that it is something outside another romantic relationship. Annie claimed that sometimes a girlfriend must knowingly accept that her boyfriend keeps a *xiaosan*. Getting married does not necessarily mean dismissing the *xiaosan*. Annie too said that girls are a way for men to demonstrate their wealth. They both specifically said wealth, but in an example Annie told me, it seems clear that it is a more general prestige that is being paroled rather than an expression of economic capacities. Annie referred to a case she'd heard about in Chinese social media, where a 19 year old girl committed suicide after a drinking bout with a professor. The girl was brought as a substitute escort, and could refuse neither to come nor to drink due to face, Annie explains. The authorities kept the case under lid. Tragic as the case is, it is of some analytic interest; did the professor signal his wealth by bringing a young lady, or did he convey a more general prestige? Professors, being on a government payroll, are not well paid in China,

[65] James Palmer translates *ernai* literally as "second woman" (Palmer 2013)

especially compared to those who succeed in the private sector. To say it with Sahlins, is the professor behaving like a *big man* to pretend that he has the wealth of a big man, or is his big man behaviour here unrelated to wealth? If the latter is the case, then the beauty of the concubine is a cultural capital, following Bourdieu, in its own right rather than just a symbolic expression for financial capital, as it would be if the concubine was but a means to demonstrate wealth. One of the key applications of Bourdieu that social anthropology can take into the field is to study the conversion of financial capital (wealth) into cultural capital (prestige) and social capital (obligations) and the eventual reversal of this. In some contexts, a man can demonstrate wealth through women directly; the ability to economically provide for more than one demonstrates an economic capacity that not all men have – the classic big man-approach, where entourage demonstrates wealth. This is not applicable in the case of the university professor, who draws the majority of his prestige precisely from being a professor, as teachers and scholars has been held in a high esteem for millennia in China. Since it is common knowledge that a professor does not earn very well on his government payroll, it seems unlikely that the professor is trying to pass as rich by behaving like the rich. Rather, he is demonstrating his capacity to obtain a desired status object. This status object can be purchased for those whose capacity for obtaining the status object is financial, but can also be achieved through other capacities, making the status object a demonstration of an unspecified capacity rather than conveying exclusively financial capacity.

I asked Hannah if the gender roles could be reversed for prestige effect; they cannot. The beauty of a neo-concubine is strictly a male prestige token. A woman cannot impress by having a pretty guy on her arm, although she could impress with a rich guy, Hannah said. Annie elaborated on this based on a concrete example, a friend of hers from Fujian. Her friend is an actress, living in Beijing. "*She's doing well. She's got a rich boyfriend and she makes her own money from shooting advertisements. But her boyfriend is cheating on her, so she's looking for a new boyfriend*". –"Is she still dating the cheating one while looking for a new one?" I asked. –"*Yes, she is. I advised her to go back home. The competition here in Beijing for a good man is too hard. There are too many pretty girls, not enough rich men. Pretty girls need a lot of money to stay pretty*". Again expanding on Bourdieu, beauty here becomes a form of social capital for women, which needs financial capital for its maintenance. Her friend had dismissed her suggestion of moving back to Fujian saying: "*only ugly girls will move back home*", something that reaffirms the disputed notion that being in Beijing contains an intrinsic element of success. It became clear from context here that Annie was using "pretty girls" in a quite specific way. Annie herself is good looking, but still talks about pretty

girls as "them". She separated herself from them by saying *"life is harder for them than for us. I feel sorry for them*" and by claiming that most pretty girls won't accept a foreign boyfriend, while Annie is engaged to a German engineer. Annie speaks good English, but suggested a reason for the reluctance of "pretty girls" to date a foreigner could *"possibly be because of the language barrier*", implying that "pretty girls" do not speak English. It might be so that "pretty girl" here means women with beauty as her only, or most prominent, asset, which would separate them from Annie who have made her own luck based on abilities, possibly supported by connections, but not by her good looks. This beauty-as-asset explanation could also be supported by another proposed reason to why "pretty girls" will not date foreigners: "*It could be the language barrier… or maybe because foreigners don't treat*". If "pretty girl" is a social approach rather than just fortunate looks, foreigners who "goes Dutch[66]" will certainly not be as lucrative as a high-spending Chinese Casanova eager on having a good-looking neo-concubine to include in his conspicuous consumption entourage when going to a fancy nightclub. In fact a neo-concubine can be integral to elements of new conspicuous consumptions, as rich men avoid regulations against property speculation by buying expensive apartments in their mistresses' names, registered on the *hukou* of the mistress. This social approach can also be extended to the office: when Hannah Liu told me how there are always women in a workplace willing to sleep with the bosses, she also told me about experiences from a company she had worked in: "*There was a secretary there with big boobs that did not know how to make photo copies or make invoices, but she would give the boss massages in his office*".

Ladies and ladies with babies in the labour market

Women in the labour market might lose career progression if they are not willing to sleep with their boss. Other factors that can impede the careers of women are the glass ceiling we will see that women implies on themselves, and of course the more orthodox proverbial glass ceiling of gender based discrimination. Although the supply-demand situation in their segment of the labour market is in favour of the young urban professionals, they are not unfamiliar with the problem. I interviewed Emily Guang, who works as operational manager at a four-star hotel near the Olympic Park. Emily herself might be older than what one would count as young urban professionals, as she graduated in 1998. The interview came in place through a friend as I wanted to hear the opinions of someone working with young urban

[66] "Go Dutch" is the expat way in Beijing: meticulously calculating each person's share of the bill by carefully keeping account of who ordered what.

professionals from the management side. In the beginning of the interview, Emily provided some interesting reflections on changes in the labour market from when she was applying for jobs herself. She studied landscaping in college. This included both landscape architecture and actual gardening. Emily never worked within landscaping, for it was hard for girls to get hired, based on gender. "*A company told a college teacher who was trying to find jobs for his graduation candidates that if they got two boys, they'd take on a girl too*", Emily recalls. Male classmates ended up mostly working in parks, although one male classmate was able to get a job in the national icon *Yiheyuan*, the Summer Palace.

In the hotel industry, Emily says there is no gender discrimination on salary. For workers with a Beijing *hukou* registration, the hotel has maternity leave insurance. Emily herself had 3 months of insurance-paid maternity leave, but returned to the hotel with the baby after one and a half month, resuming her work duties from a hotel room. The insurance company still paid for the remaining six weeks, so on the hotel's books, Emily worked for free this period. Although Emily makes an effort to tell this in a way that makes this early return her wilful choice as a dedicated employee, it seems far more likely that Emily chose as she did to avoid having the maternity leave damage her career progression. Telling about the welfare benefits that befalls mothers, Emily gladly admits that the hotel prefers hiring boys. When asked if she could have had her own career progression if she had started ten years earlier, Emily somewhat contradicting says that "*the hotel industry isn't like other sectors; hotel career progression depends on ability and personality. Before, girls wouldn't get the same chances, but it's more equal now*." Given that she two minutes before said that the hotel prefers hiring boys to avoid paying maternal benefits, this seems not to be the case. There is an explanation that dissolves the contradiction somewhat: that once one has crossed the threshold and become an accepted insider, opportunities are more equal. This is not to say that there is no gender stereotypes applied to accepted insiders. Emily says that the hotel also like to have a woman as the front office manager, as "*girls are more soft, more warm*". Emily herself was offered the position of General Manager, bur declined as she felt that this position ought to be held by a man. "*Women are not aggressive enough to hold such a position. The General Manager must be tough because he must make some tough calls. I may not be confident enough to steer the hotel in the right direction*". The fact that Emily Huang was offered the position in the first place shows that the glass ceiling is not absolute; as a candidate, she was preferred rather than ruled out. It was still gender-based stereotypes that kept Emily Guang from becoming General Manager, but it was her own.

On the topic, Annie Huang quite tellingly told me: *"in China there are no male*

nurses." It was an effective way of saying that there is still a considerable distance between men and women in the labour market. As the divide between the ideal woman's role and the expectations from the workplace have been clear, more "aggressive" women wants to compete with men, Annie explains. She adds that "*in my MBA class, all the professors are men*", signalling that there is still ground to be covered for women. It is interesting to note that she uses "aggressive" instead of say, "ambitious". Although she make it clear from context through intonation and mimics that she used "aggressive" in an extended sense (hence the scare quotes), "aggressive" is not intrinsically positive, like "ambitious" would be. Further, "aggressive" carries certain male connotations; Emily Guang said women should be front desk managers because they are soft and warm, while the General Manager had to make tough calls, so he must be tough, so he must be a man. There might be another dimension of "aggressive" that is specific to Confucian-influenced East Asia. "Aggressive" is close to being in diametric opposition to Confucian ideals such as being tempered, controlled and virtuous. Li Hongtao surveyed gendered opinions on gender and found that "men's criteria for appraising both men and women followed traditional gender order norms, disliking […] "women who do not know and keep their place""(Li 2006, 67). The Confucian ideal person is sometimes referred to as the template Confucian gentle*man*, for he is certainly male. Li Hongtao's table of positive and negative gendered characteristics shows a significant correspondence between Confucian ideals and the male expectations towards both men and women, while Li also notes that "women's view on gender relations revealed a position that challenged such norms" (Li 2006, 67). If neo-Confucianism is seen as an answer to the ideological vacuum created when Mao's maxim of serving the People was replaced by Deng's maxim that it is glorious to be rich, in many ways similar to Gordon Gekko's maxim "greed is good", then it should be questioned if Confucian gender relations re-emerge as part of this neo-Confucianism.

New gender relations in New China?

Fei Xiaotong asserted famously that "Chinese society is fundamentally rural (Fei 1992), arguing that the key to understanding China was to understand the village. Certain features of a more traditionalist economy can still be identified, also under "socialism with a market economy". Hollywood has sold the notion of romantic love with great vigour, but this notion is nevertheless a fairly new idea in world history; Claude Levi-Strauss famously argued that the exchange of women, goods and messages are the basic forms of communication: "In human society, it is the men who exchange the women, and not vice versa" (Lévi-Strauss

2008, 47). Yan Yunxiang talks about the development of the notion of romantic love in China (Yan 2009), (Yan 2003). According to Hannah Liu, there is still an explicit instrumental dimension to many Chinese marriages: "*a lot of women see their husband as a long-term meal ticket*". From the male side, there has been an instrumental dimension to marriage for ages; the duty towards the ancestors to continue the family line by having one or preferably several sons. Although ancestor worship is not as fundamental as it was, the plight to pass the family name on to a son still weighs heavy on Chinese young men, I was assured by a Chinese male friend who told me about the relief he felt when their one child was born a son. Hannah Liu introduced me to her friend Zhao Yümei, who comes from Dongbei[67], and could tell me the same as in Kirkpatrick's disturbing book about life in North Korea: many female refugees across the Yalu or the Tumen river have a forced marriage in a Chinese village as their final destination instead of the promised land of Singapore, as some brokers simply sell them as brides to villages where all the females of marriageable age have left for the cities. (Kirkpatrick 2012). Hannah said that in southern China, the phenomenon also exists, but with girls from Viet Nam. "*It's a package with after sale services included*", Hannah said dryly. That means that if the women run away, they will be chased down by the sellers and delivered back to the buyer. Disturbingly, Kirkpatrick (2012) describes the same phenomenon, in fact using the exact same corporate rhetoric of after-sale services. Hannah said the price for a Vietnamese wife in Guilin is 50 000 Yuan. From food-ticket mentality to refugee bride brokers, the message is clear; marriage in China is not necessarily founded on mutual romantic feelings. Some (men) even find it better to be the volunteer part of a forced marriage than to not be married.

This instrumentality in marriage is certainly challenged as it is confronted daily with popular culture's gospel of romantic love, from Hollywood or from China's own productions. Yan Yunxiang has noted how "many villagers identified the messages of soap operas and pop music as a major source for changes in the family ideal"(Yan 2009, xxv). In TV shows there are little room for the filial, obedient and self-sacrificing wives society once demanded. The TV show is interrupted for commercials, and you cannot fail to notice how picture-perfect families can be used to market nearly anything in China. No matter what you want to sell, it seems you can market it by showing a happy family, who centres on the young couple with their healthy, smiling and playful son and one (or both) of the grandparents apparently co-residing in a grand, well-decorated apartment, living in great harmony with a view over the

[67] Lit. "Northeast", referring to Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang.

lake and a green lawn outside. The commercials end, and a TV show where true love and self-realization is the catalyst continues. The high divorce rate in China bears witness to the expectations and realities of marriage not corresponding; when I was living in Kunming, Dr. Huang Jiansheng (pers.comm) told me about two-week marriages, a phenomenon increasingly common, he said. A two-week marriage is typically when two one-child policy youngsters who are used to having the world revolve around them marries and, since their mothers are not there, discovers that dishes don't wash themselves after all. They have a massive argument about what to do about the dirty dishes, the romantic bubble bursts and they decide to divorce and move back home to mum, where dishes do wash themselves. Spoiled adolescents aside, the divorce rate is considered a political problem by the Party, for two reasons. One is obviously social stability. The other is the long-running elite notion in China that the low human quality (*suzhi*) of the general populace is keeping China for modernising. As Confucianism is re-emerging as a public discourse of morality, seen for instance in Hu Jintao's notion of "harmonious society", the five relations of Confucianism becomes a state concern again although they are not referred to explicitly. This serves as an interesting context when Hannah Liu pointed out for me that the government now is working to change the husband-as-meal-ticket mentality, advocating values and true love. One of these government campaigns I observed myself; it was hard to miss it as it was big, pink and with hearts, plastered on big posters in Beijing's metro stations, making sure that many millions would see it every day. Although it seems somewhat totalitarian when the mutual (or less mutual) agreement to dissolve a marriage becomes concern for the state, totalitarianism rarely comes as Big Brother advocating true love and genuine romantic feelings. It might be called for: when I were talking with Hannah Liu and her friend Zhao Yümei about north Korean and Vietnamese brides-for-sale, the latter put the concluding remarks on the topic as straightforward as this: "*In poor places, there is no love in families*". Poor places will often translate into rural areas in China, and also so in Zhao Yümei's statement, as she continued with a contrasting remark: "*In the countryside, marriages can be assisted. Bendiren in cities marry into peaceful, happy lives, because they have a house in the city. A family where all four grandparents are Beijing citizens will have no material worries*". Bear in mind that due to the one-child policy, these two couples of grandparents will have one child and one apartment each, and these two children will parent the grandchild, who will be the sole inheritor to two Beijing apartments. If this two-apartment Adam should marry a two-apartment Eve, they could sell three apartments; join the higher echelons of the Chinese middle class without working a day of their lives and still have an apartment to pass on to

their (one) child. Being born is a lottery, and Zhao Yumei's point strikes home: being born as a proper citizen (*hukou*-wise) of a 1st tier Chinese city is indeed striking good fortune.

One should however not reduce marriage in China to a question of instrumentality, prestige, linage continuation, provision and breadwinning. "*Naked marriage is becoming a big word these days*", Susan Long says when I ask if she is acquainted with the term. A "naked marriage" is the scornful nickname for a marriage where the preferred material prerequisites are lacking, such as a house. "*Women don't want to marry a man with no house",* Susan continues*. "Women with higher education or western education aren't as adamant on this, though*". Securing ownership of independent living quarter, what Susan calls a house, is normally buying an apartment as a whole free-standing house would be ridiculously expensive. Buying a standard apartment in an apartment block is challenging enough. Hannah Liu invested in an apartment in Guangzhou in 2005 with a friend, paying 1.8 million yuan. The previous owner bought it in 2004 for 900 000 and kept it empty, waiting for prices to rise – an increase of 100% on one year! Hannah and her friend sold it in 2009 for 2,75 million yuan If a *bailing* with a net income of 15 000 a month saved his entire monthly salary, it would take more than fifteen years to save up 2,75 million yuan, assuming that the price of the apartment did not increase during those fifteen years. Hannah Liu told me, "*Young people want to buy homes. It's related to career and marriage, and it is a cultural value to own one's own home. But now, paying down a house in a big city might take 60 years of down payment. 20 years down payment on a normal apartment would cost approximately 11.000 per month, so even if one is doing OK with a salary of 15 000, it will eat most of the salary. This is called* shoufangnu[68]*, it means slave to own home*". Hannah's own calculation of the period and cost of down payment for a "normal apartment" suggests that the one she sold in Guangzhou in 2009 was somewhat above average. Further complicating, one now need a Beijing *hukou* to be able to loan 80% of the purchase price, otherwise one can only loan 50% of the price. Initially meant to give Beijing *hukou* holders a head start in their home city real estate market, the policy also keeps ordinary young urban professionals who has not obtained Beijing *hukou* from entering the real estate market. One is only allowed to own one apartment in first tier cities, making rich men buy apartments in the names of their mistresses, Hannah told me. Annie Huang also said that billionaires would use fake IDs to own extra apartments in 1st tier cities; a famous media case a while back starred a female billionaire exposed for owning 41 apartments in Beijing. "No house" comes in levels, as owning one outranks renting, which

[68] 收放奴!

outranks living with mum. An obvious reason for women's reluctance to marry a man without his own living quarters would be if he is living with his parents; if they marry, so will she. If he rents, the landlord can terminate the contract at an inopportune time, and that could also mean living with his parents whereas a man owning his own living quarters are considered safe. The rental market in China also works in its own peculiar ways. As Annie Huang said it; "*Short term perspective is typical for China. For instance, if a landlord has no guanxi to the renters, why should he then renovate the apartment properly?*" Annie told me of a colleague who rented a two-storey hutong apartment where part of the 2nd storey floor fell down, but the landlord did not agree that this was sufficient reason to terminate the contract! Hannah Liu commented on the unfriendly rental market that: "*In China, it's not worth taking the cheaper deal when renting. The costlier alternative saves you a lot of hassle*".

In the question of housing, the parallel individualisation of economic and social life comes together very clearly. Naked marriages happen to such an extent that an expression for it was coined. Although there is optimism in this defiance of materialistic thinking, a materialistic pessimism lurks in the shadows; although a naked marriage is better than not getting married, the ideal situation would be entering a marriage with material conditions above those of a naked marriage. As Chinese young women are increasingly reluctant to patrilocal marriage, once the ideal of traditional China, the pressing social concern of entering wedlock, places the burden of securing independent housing on the hopeful bachelor, which is an economic concern. In traditional China, both these concerns would be aided by the patriarchal family or lineage. During radical Maoism, urban marriage happened within the *danwei* and the *danwei* provided housing. As many State Owned Enterprises inherited housing complexes from their *danwei* predecessor, being able to marry by securing SOE housing could be the motivation for a young urban professional to make a strategic decision to work for an SOE.

The fact that one must have a Beijing *hukou* to secure favourable loan policies for housing loans in Beijing aptly demonstrating the importance of *hukou*, which comes through one's employer and thereby becomes another asset that young urban professionals strategizes to secure, to the point of choosing career paths likely to provide *hukou* over those not likely, and likewise with choosing employer.

CHAPTER 5: Understanding Young Urban Professionals – a summary discussion.

Go It Alone?

In this final chapter my aim is to reflect further on certain key areas arising from the discussions in the thesis. The first point relates to the overall focus on individualization and how my case represents a Chinese form of individualization. As Yan has argued, individualisation in China is "characterised by the management of the party-state and the absence of cultural democracy, a welfare state regime and classic individualism" (Yan 2009, 290). In acknowledgement of the unique circumstances of the Chinese process of individualisation, the management of individualisation by the party-state has been discussed through revisiting the historical development of China, following developments in both economic and social life. During radical Maoism, the *danwei* total institution was central in both economic and social life as a cradle-to-grave welfare provider with such a cellular structure that *danwei* endogamy became a common marriage form. As the *danwei* total institution was reformed into State Owned Enterprises, the corporate welfare provided by the state diminished greatly. The State Owned Enterprises do however accept a plight of social responsibility that their private competitors would not, as the SOEs strive to avoid layoffs and are not as concerned with employee loss rate as they see it as a gift to society when an employee who the SOE has invested in jumps ship for employment outside the SOE. The SOEs are also holders of key resources that young urban professionals strive to obtain, such as Beijing *hukou*, *peiyang* and company-owned housing with subsidised rents. As access to individual living quarters in order to secure neolocal residence is an immensely important asset when looking for a spouse, the SOEs may provide the solution to another concern here. On the other side, the SOEs are considered the most "Chinese" of Chinese companies, here with negative associations as young urban professionals want their abilities to count more than their social persona, and therefore dislikes both workplaces where *guanxi* is emphasised and the role of *guanxi* in society at large.

My second point relates to how my informants expressed themselves while talking about this process of individualization. We have noted that a special concept stands out pointing towards the way the informants conceptualized this. The concept is *peiyang***,** a form of corporate grooming that consists of the training offered by the workplace and the internal career mobility within the company. This is held out as important by my informants, suggesting that

they intend to remain faithful to their ability-based approach expressed in the rejection of *guanxi* as career-maker in the workplace. It further relates to *suzhi* concerns, as the Party has strived to make education the answer to the supposed problem of insufficient "human quality" in the population holding China back. If one can obtain continuous education, it will imply continuous improvement of one's *suzhi*. Further, young urban professionals owe the majority of their success to their ability rather than their *guanxi,* and continuously increasing their abilities secures them from stagnating professionally, which could lead to them being bypassed and made irrelevant at their workplace, which again could lead to the ultimate insecurity of losing one's job unless employed a SOE who offers a remarkable job stability. By conceptually connecting *peiyang* to well-established concepts such as *suzhi* and *guanxi,* individualisation in China are seen in a new light as the *peiyang –suzhi* connection highlights how the individual strives to improve oneself, a reaction to the demise of a socially defined ideal citizen as either being a filial member of an extended kin group nor being a good class.-struggling communist are ideals that provide meaning in China today. The *peiyang – guanxi* connection reinforces the tension between *guanxi* and *nengli*, social connections versus individual ability, notwithstanding that *guanxi* in fact can be given as *peiyang.* If the Chinese dream is to get connected, but connections are means to an even higher end, the meritocratic approach of young urban professionals stand out as an alternative strategy to achieve this higher end – hereby not implying that young urban professionals would mind getting connected if they could. As long as they have merits but lack connections, young urban professionals will praise the merit approach and throw moral accusations against the connections approach, while continuing to improve both their merits and their *suzhi* through *peiyang*.

Managing the social Self

We have also seen in this thesis how concerned the young urban professionals were in their reflections about marriage, sex and gender, and I also want to raise this issue again and fit it into this process of individualisation. Firstly young urban professionals are under considerable pressure to get married; Hannah Liu commented that "marriage is a religion to Chinese parents". The insensitive label "left-over woman" demonstrates what society offers those who failed to get picked, an individualisation of what was previously a social concern between kin groups. "left-over women" are ironically often over-achieving women, either being too highly educated or earning too much as there is a strong social emphasis on male superiority in marriage. As the individual is increasingly left to fend for itself after the retreat of state

welfare, it is noteworthy that society chastises women who fend so well for themselves that men feel intimidated. Women do not want to become left-over women, which is shown when fear for becoming over-educated prevents women from taking master's degrees, thereby submitting to the ideal of the undisputed male breadwinner. Women with Ph.D. degrees are in particular seen as truly unmarriageable freaks, even being joked about as a third sex. It seems safe to assume that all Chinese female doctorates have thoroughly contemplated this dimension before making the strategic life choice of applying for a Ph.D. Bear in mind that Annie Huang, who considered a Ph.D. degree, is engaged to a German who does not share this Chinese ideal of male superiority. Another strategic option that women can choose with ramifications to the notion of the Self is to be a "pretty girl", a distinctive social approach which young urban professionals relate to the absence of ability; "pretty girls" are generalized as not in command of English. For those who fail to become a full-time neo-concubine, women must make a strategic choice regarding whether or not to apply themselves sexually in the workplace to secure strategic benefits; there are always women willing to sleep with the bosses", Hannah Liu says above. The emergence of neo-concubines is an old measure of male prestige resurfacing, as men can reinforce themselves as successful through having mistresses; this concerns the construction of the successful new male Self. The social ideal of the undisputed male breadwinner takes its toll on men too, as I was told about a husband unable to make love to his wife from the stress caused by knowing that she earned more money; a peculiar case of Bourdieu's term habitus, the embodiment of social concerns. It is noteworthy that Francis Wang, successful in many measures for young urban professionals, quickly changed the subject when the marriage emerged as a topic, indicating unease towards discussing this yet obtained measure of success; the construction of the successful Self was not yet completed, something that was uncomfortable to talk about. Further it should be noted that Francis redirected the discussion about the successful life away from marriage and towards the ideal residency, which at some point in life ceases to be Beijing as no young urban professional who was asked expressed any desire to live out their days in Beijing, in fact quite the contrary. At some point they wanted to leave Beijing, having tasted the Beijing dream and found it did not fully earn its reputation. This rejection of a once held dream also extends through their political disaffection towards the marketization of the Chinese economy, and particularly the welfare services that urban professionals once had universal access to. Through the *renkou suzhi* discourse of the CCP the shortcomings of China is blamed on the Chinese population, and as young urban professionals tend to internalise their political grievances and thereby focusing their explanations on themselves, in which the Self is made

responsible for all of its own shortcomings. This is seen in the desire to move abroad that surfaced when discussing the political concerns of young urban professionals: they themselves are the only thing they can change, the only factor that can be altered in the equation and all contributions to improving society must therefore come through improving oneself.

Young urban professionals as a class?

A final discussion is to return to the question about who these young urban professionals are. In the introduction we pointed at the emic concept of bailing as well as the etic concept of yuppie. Here I want to discuss both within the wider question of whether the young urban professionals make up a class. Introducing new classes to the analysis of a socialist society that now itself refrains from using the word class in political discourse should be problematized, as official China now refers to what it used to call classes as "social groups[69]", between which there are no Marxist dialectical oppositions and no need for any class struggle that would disturb the national harmony. Still, anthropologist Fenggang Yang calls yuppies a new class when discussing how yuppies in China consume modernity through McDonalds and Christianity. (Yang 2005, 438). In its original form in the US "yuppies" was rather a way of discussing class without using the word class, as "yuppies" started as a media buzz word and class is not a very popular word in American political debate. Hammond avoided using the word class when he referred to yuppies as a "political species", ironically comparable to when Chinese official discourse rephrases class as "social status groups". A "political species" of shared economic background and interests would probably be called a class *an sich* if Marx was asked.

Chinese yuppies are treated as a something very close to class in literature, without necessary being called a class, or being called a class without being treated as such. Yang (2005) for instance initially separates conceptually between young professionals (employees) and business people (employers) but nevertheless treat them as one group for the data collection and analysis. Cui and Liu (2001) calls yuppies "the most prosperous urban elite in China", and "prosperous urban elite", which might sound like a class that a Marxist would suggest that the less prosperous classes should struggle against, while Cui and Liu at the same time estimating their average annual household income to be 78.181 RMB (Cui and Liu 2001, 96) The observant reader will note that this household average income is less than the

[69] See for instance http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90778/8335846.html (accessed 15.12.2013). As this newspaper is often referred to as a government mouthpiece, it is safe to treat this as the voice of official China.

annualized minimum income required for an individual to be called *bailing*[70], but it is more problematic to refer to those with an annual household income of 78 000 RMB as the most prosperous urban elite in China. Compared to very many places in rural China 78 000 is surely a lot of money, but the most prosperous urban elite in China's 1st tier cities can easily spend that on a single night; a *huayi* co-student at BLCU had sufficient *guanxi* to be treated a dinner where *Maotai* rice liquor costing no less than 30 000 RMB per bottle was served. Cheng Li writes about yuppies as

> "A group of young, well-educated, urban economic elites – China's "yuppie corps" – has recently emerged and taken the spotlight. A few distinguished members of this new elite group have already become chief executive officers (CEOs) of many leading companies in the People's Republic of China" (Li:1).

I argue that the social distance between Cui and Liu's yuppies with a household income of 78000 RMB and Li's CEO yuppies excludes merging these claims about yuppie status into one larger definition; they cannot both be right. Even though a *bailing* exceeds Cui and Liu's average household income with a significant margin, they cannot be placed in the same class as the Ferrari-driving CEOs of leading companies that Li calls yuppies. The CEOs of the four Fortune 500[71] companies that Li mentions may be young, urban, high-earning, highly educated and very professional in their work life, but should be excluded from the empirical category "young urban professionals", as they are surely excluded from the emic category *bailing*. That *bailing* has a financial limit also upwards suggests that a *bailing* might outgrow himself and cease being *bailing*, for instance if promoted to CEO. If young urban professionals should be counted as the elite segment in China, as Cui and Liu proposes, this calls for a clear-cut separation between the young urban professionals and the super-elite. This separation addresses both differences in economic and political capacities, which increasingly travel in pair in China after Jiang Zemin decided to allow Party membership to capitalists. As it seems hard to pinpoint young urban professionals as a class *an sich*, young urban professionals would need some shared political agenda to be discussed as a class *für sich.* As the *bailing* category came as a response to new realities created by the economic reforms that also fuelled the development of individualisation, a *bailing* political agenda should be approached in light of economic reforms and individualisation. The political disaffection of young urban professionals are duly noted, as for instance their frustration over the over-commodification of welfare services that emerged as an unintended outcome of the

[70] According to Chen Xiaomei's definition a *bailing* should make 8000-15000 Yuan per month; this is 96000 – 180000 Yuan per year.
[71] *Fortune* magazine's prestigious list of the 500 largest companies globally in terms of revenue.

marketization of welfare. Their political disaffection is directed against the power holders. Hannah Liu commented that "*educated Chinese people know that the government is spinning them by tail, but the government still treat people like they are idiots*". Something Linda Wei once told me serves to exemplify this. "*Do you want a fake feel-good moment? Watch the national news. There was a story of government-owned apartments in Tianjin being rented out by the city government for 17 yuan per month*", Linda said with a headshake and a giggle, amused by the notion that the government expected people to believe such an unlikely tale about government benevolence. Yet this political disaffection see no practical consequences that might change political realities in China, save for the constant tug of war[72] between internet censorship agencies and disaffected citizens in social media. I will argue that the prime reason for not discussing young urban professionals as a class *für sich* is their tendency to internalise political grievances.

Internalisation as a response to individualisation: *suzhi* discourse

As the discussion about "chuppies" as a class encountered the same problem of definition as yuppies did in the US, it is hard to argue that "chuppies" are a class *an sich*, in Marx's vocabulary. There is little indication that young urban professionals see themselves as a class *für sich* either, despite Zhao Yumei calling China a polarized society which could be seen as in line with dialectical materialism. As the discussion above shows, the political grievances that young urban professionals holds against society finds internalised, individual solutions such as emigrating because the system cannot be changed, only personal circumstances or refraining from having children. Another solution would be to yield to what society agrees is happiness, as in Robert Brown's remark about Chinese office girls being more obsessed with settling down and establishing a nuclear family than young women in the US.

As resourceful, highly educated and holding a key place in the all-important economic growth of China, young urban professionals have done everything society asked them to, but society does still hold out an ideal to strive against, albeit not as clearly defined as the "learn from Lei Feng"-campaigns of radical Maoism. This ideal is to constantly improve oneself by raising one's *suzhi*, whose national insufficiency hampers China from developing. Regarding the

[72] Gain a metre one day, lose it the next: Chinese "netizens" use sound sameness to avoid censorship. When "harmony" (*hexie* – 和谐*)* became a politically sensitive word as it was the slogan of Hu Jintao social policy, netizens started using "river crab" (also *hexie* –河蟹) to avoid censorship; the censorship algorithms looks for the characters for "harmony" while all human beings understand that criticising "river crab society" is a critique of Hu Jintao，including the employees of the censorship bureaus which manually censors retrospectively what the algorithms miss.

daily concern of young urban professionals, they can choose to keep improving themselves hoping that change for the better lies in keep doing what society demands. *Suzhi* as a substitute for class is well-known from literature:

> "While I agree that the word suzhi has displaced that of class, I cannot accept the conclusion that suzhi discourse elides discussion of class in the same way that (neo)liberal discourse does. Neoliberal discourse asserts that class difference and social hierarchies of all forms are non-existent, unimportant, or irrelevant. Suzhi discourse reifies rather than elides forms of hierarchical difference; it offers a way of speaking explicitly about class without using the word 'class'"(Kipnis 2007, 390)

In discussing young urban professionals as a class, it could be referred to the un- or underemployed rural graduates in Stornes' (2012) study, who also conquered the Chinese education system, only to find that society would not reward their efforts with a job in Beijing. Instead of showing any political sentiments that could serve as a base for a class mentality, the explanation to their misfortune was internalised and the fault placed entirely on themselves. Society could not be blamed for their failures; they needed to improve themselves. The importance of improving oneself is so central in Stornes' study that the study is named *'I want to improve myself'. Underemployed rural graduates in urban areas of China'* (Stornes 2012). There is a major difference between the un- or underemployed rural graduates at the outskirts of Beijing that Stornes studied and the young urban professionals working and living in Beijing proper I interviewed, yet I found that improving oneself was of vital importance also among young urban professionals who had overcome that final challenge of getting a good job in Beijing. Did reaching the promised land of employment remove improving oneself as a pressing concern? It did not. *Peiyang* discourse shows the drive to keep improving oneself, also for young urban professionals. Linda Wei attended English classes after work, paid for by her employer. Linda also told me she considered taking a part-time Master of Public Administration degree, in which case she would negotiate with her employer about getting it subsidised, which would be *peiyang.* Annie Huang, who was taking a Master of Business and Administration (MBA) degree in addition to working full time, even considered taking a Ph.D. degree in finance until her boyfriend, who is a German (not sharing the Chinese male fear of a women with higher education than himself), vetoed it on the grounds of being too time-consuming. Annie told me: "*it's good to improve yourself constantly*". Internalising the blame for one's failure to do well in the new competitive market economy through *suzhi* discourse can be related to a deliberate attempt from the political power apparatus to establish this conceptual link in the minds of those who fail. This is accepted, as it corresponds with the

freedom to both succeed and fail that the market reforms offered; as Beck writes in one of the classics on individualisation:

> "Individualization in this sense means that each person's biography is removed from given determinants and placed in his or her own hands, open and dependent on decisions". (Beck 1992, 135).

This then serves to summarise as follows: young urban professionals must navigate an ongoing process of individualisation in China driven by the economic reforms and the development of a form of capitalism to the liking of a communist party, setting its mark upon both economic life and social life in contemporary Beijing.

LITERATURE LIST:

Anagnost, Ann. 2004. "The corporeal politics of quality (suzhi)." *Public culture* no. 16 (2):189-208.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. "Theory in anthropology: center and periphery." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* no. 28 (2):356-361.

Appadurai, Arjun. 2011. "Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy 1990." *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*:282-295.

Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. Vol. 17: Sage.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. Algeria 1960: The Disenchantment of the World, the Sense of Honor, the Kabyle House or the World Reversed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bruun, Ole. 1993. *Business and bureaucracy in a Chinese city: An ethnography of private business households in contemporary China*: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

Bøe, Camilla Aasen. IN PRESS. *Women and Family in urban China; Contested Female Individualisation*, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen.

Carpini, Michael Delli, and Lee Sigelman. 1986. "Do yuppies matter? Competing explanations of their political distinctiveness." *Public Opinion Quarterly* no. 50 (4):502-518.

Chang, Chun, and Yijiang Wang. 1994. "The nature of the township-village enterprise." *Journal of Comparative Economics* no. 19 (3):434-452.

Chang, Xiangqun. 2010. *Guanxi or Li Shang Wanglai?: Reciprocity, Social Support Networks, and Social Creativity in a Chinese Village*: Airiti Press.

Chen (ed), Nancy N 2001. *China urban: Ethnographies of contemporary culture*: Duke University Press.

Chen, Nancy N. 2001. "Health, Wealth and the Good Life." In *China Urban*, edited by Nancy N Chen. Duke University Press.

Cui, Geng, and Qiming Liu. 2001. "Emerging market segments in a transitional economy: a study of urban consumers in China." *Journal of International Marketing*:84-106.

Davis, Deborah S. 2000. "Social Class Transformation in Urban China: Training, Hiring, and Promoting Urban Professionals and Managers after 1949." *Modern China* no. 26 (3):251-275. doi: 10.2307/189419.

Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah. 1973. *Traditional patrimonialism and modern neopatrimonialism*: Sage publications London.

Farquharson, John-James. 2013. *In the Belly of the Dragon*: Xlibris Corporation.

Fei, Xiaotong. 1992. *From the soil: The foundations of Chinese society*: Univ of California Press.

Fenby, Jonathan. 2009. *The Penguin history of modern China : the fall and rise of a great power, 1850-2009*. Rev. ed. London: Penguin Books.

Fleischer, Friederike. 2007. "“To Choose a House Means to Choose a Lifestyle.” The Consumption of Housing and Class‐Structuration in Urban China." *City & Society* no. 19 (2):287-311.

Fleischer, Friederike. 2010. *Suburban Beijing: housing and consumption in contemporary China*: University of Minnesota Press.

Fong, Vanessa. 2006. *Only hope: Coming of age under China's one-child policy*: Stanford University Press.

Francis, Corinna-Barbara. 1996. "Reproduction of danwei institutional features in the context of China's market economy: the case of Haidian District's high-tech sector." *CHINA QUARTERLY-LONDON*-:839-859.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. "The presentation of self in everyday life." *New York: Anchor Doubleday* no. 212:1-17.

Hammond, John L. 1986. "Yuppies." *Public Opinion Quarterly* no. 50 (4):487-501.

Heberer, Thomas. 2007. *Doing business in rural China: Liangshan’s new ethnic entrepreneurs*: Univ of Washington Press.

Heimer, Maria, and Stiǥ Thøgersen. 2006. *Doing fieldwork in China*: University of Hawaii Press.

Henderson, Gail E, and Myron S Cohen. 1984. *The Chinese hospital: A socialist work unit*: Yale University Press New Haven.

Ho, Karen. 2009. *Liquidated: an ethnography of Wall Street*: Duke University Press.

Hoffman, Lisa 2001. "Guiding College Graduates to Work: Social Constructions of Labor Markets in Dalian." In *China Urban*, edited by Nany Chen.

Hsu, Francis LK. 1971. *Under the ancestors' shadow: Kinship, personality, and social mobility in China*. Vol. 123: Stanford University Press.

Hsü, Dau-Lin. 1970. "The Myth of the" Five Human Relations" of Confucius." *Monumenta Serica* no. 29:27-37.

Hwang, Kwang-kuo. 1987. "Face and Favor: The Chinese Power Game." *American Journal of Sociology* no. 92 (4):944-974. doi: 10.2307/2780044.

Jacka, Tamara, Andrew Kipnis, and Sally Sargeson. 2013. *Contemporary China*: Cambridge University Press.

Jenkins, Richard. 1996. *Social identity*: Routledge.

Kipnis, Andrew. 2007. "Neoliberalism reified: suzhi discourse and tropes of neoliberalism in the People's Republic of China." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* no. 13 (2):383-400.

Kirkpatrick, Melanie. 2012. *Escape from North Korea*: Encounter Books

Kissinger, Henry. 2011. *On China*: Penguin Canada.

Kurotani, Sawa. 2004. "Multi-sited transnational ethnography and the shifting construction of fieldwork." *Anthropologists in the field: Cases in participant observation*:201-215.

Leblanc, Jack. 2008. *Business Republic of China; tales from the front line of China's new revolution*. Hong Kong: Blacksmith Books.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 2008. *Structural anthropology*: Basic Books.

Li, Hongtao. 2006. "Intervention and Counseling Strategies for Men's Domestic Violence Against Women in Beijing." *Women And Gender in Chinese Studies* no. 29:64.

Li, Qiang. 2010. *Thirty Years of Reform and Social Changes in China*. Vol. 4: Brill.

Liu, Zhiqiang. 2005. "Institution and inequality: the< i> hukou</i> system in China." *Journal of Comparative Economics* no. 33 (1):133-157.

Lü, Xiabo, and Elizabeth J Perry. 1997. *Danwei: The changing Chinese workplace in historical and comparative perspective*: ME Sharpe.

Marks, Robert B. 2002. *The origins of the modern world : a global and ecological narrative, World social change*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.

McGregor, James. 2012a. *No Ancient Wisdom, No Followers: The Challenges of Chinese Authoritarian Capitalism*: Easton Studio Press.

McGregor, Richard. 2012b. *The Party: the secret world of China's communist rulers*: HarperCollins.

Palmer, James. 2013. "Kept women - why young women in Rural China becomes the mistresses of wealthy older men." *http://www.aeonmagazine.com/living-together/why-young-women-in-rural-china-become-the-mistresses-of-wealthy-older-men/ (Accessed 10.10.2013).*

Perry, Elizabeth J. 1997. "From native place to workplace: labor origins and outcomes of China's danwei system." *Danwei: the changing Chinese workplace in historical and comparative perspective*:42-59.

Perry, Elizabeth J, and Xiaobo Lü. 1997. "Introduction: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective." *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective*:1-23.

Potter, Sulamith Heins, and Jack M Potter. 1990. *China's Peasants: the Anthropology of a Revolution*: Cambridge University Press.

Pye, Lucian W. 1990. "China: erratic state, frustrated society." *Foreign Affairs* no. 69 (4):56-74.

Redding, S Gordon. 1993. *The spirit of Chinese capitalism*. Vol. 22: Walter de Gruyter.

Ren, Xuefei. 2013. *Urban China, China Today*: Polity Press

Rofel, Lisa Beth. 1989. *Eating out of one big pot: Hegemony and resistance in a Chinese factory*: Stanford University.

Schein, Louisa. 2001. "Urbanity, cosmopolitanism, consumption." *China urban: Ethnographies of contemporary culture*:225-241.

Schoppa, R. Keith. 2010. *Revolution and its past : identities and change in modern Chinese history*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall/Pearson.

Schrecker, John E. 2004. *"The" Chinese Revolution in Historical Perspective*: Greenwood Publishing Group.

So, Ying Lun, and Anthony Walker. 2006. *Explaining guanxi: The Chinese business network*: Taylor & Francis US.

Solinger, Dorothy J. 1997. "The impact of the floating population on the danwei: shifts in the pattern of labor mobility control and entitlement provision." *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective.*:195-222.

Stockman, Norman. 2000. *Understanding Chinese society*. Malden, Mass.: Polity Press.

Stornes, Solveig. 2012. "'I want to improve myself'. Underemployed rural graduates in urban areas of China."

Story, Jonathan. 2009. *China uncovered*: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Tang, Wenfang, and William L Parish. 2000. *Chinese urban life under reform: The changing social contract*: Cambridge University Press.

Weitzman, Martin L, and Chenggang Xu. 1994. "Chinese township-village enterprises as vaguely defined cooperatives." *Journal of Comparative Economics* no. 18 (2):121-145.

Weller, RP, and Y Sun. 2010. "The Dynamics of Religious Growth and Change in Contemporary China." *China Today, China Tomorrow: Domestic Politics, Economy, and Society*:29-50.

Xing, Li. 2013. *The Rise of China and the Capitalist World Order*: Ashgate Publishing.

Xinran. 2010. *China witness*: Random House Digital, Inc.

Yan, Yunxiang. 2003. Private life under socialism. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Yan, Yunxiang. 2009. *The individualization of Chinese society*: Berg Publishers.

Yang, Fenggang. 2005. "Lost in the market, saved at McDonald's: Conversion to Christianity in urban China." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* no. 44 (4):423-441.

Yang, Mayfair M. 1994. *Gifts, favors, and banquets: The art of social relationships in China*: Cornell University Press.

Yeh, Wen-hsin. 1997. "The Republican origins of the danwei: the case of Shanghai's Bank of China." *Danwei: The Changing Chinese Workplace in Historical and Comparative Perspective. Armonk: ME Sharpe*:42-59.

Zhang, Li, and Aihwa Ong. 2008. *Privatizing China: socialism from afar*: Cornell University Press.

Zhang, Qing. 2005. "A Chinese yuppie in Beijing: Phonological variation and the construction of a new professional identity." *Language in Society* no. 34 (3):431-466.

Zhang, Tong, and Barry Schwartz. 1997. "Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: A study in collective memory." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* no. 11 (2):189-212.

Zhu, Jianhua, Xinshu Zhao, and Hairong Li. 1990. "Public political consciousness in China: an empirical profile." *Asian Survey* no. 30 (10):992-1006.